It was completely silent. I opened my eyes. The world looked like a picture. There was a bird stuck in mid-flap, and I saw a squirrel frozen in the process of running up a nearby pine. The intense wind had stopped, and the swaying angle of the leaves made the trees look like dancers. It was like a movie still, all the action caught up in one moment, a unique moment that never happened before and never would happen again. But I could make it last forever.

I could, couldn’t I? If a moment was perfect enough, if I really wanted to, I could make everything stop so that moment could always be, so I could always live in it. But I wouldn’t really be living in it. I would be living in a dead world. The trees were dancing, the sun was shining, but the birds weren’t singing. The perfect moment was gone, it wasn’t a movie scene anymore, it was an exhibit in a museum, after hours, dead and empty, and so quiet the silence is oppressive, forcing its way into my ears, demanding that I listen to it.

I closed my eyes, willing the silence to go away. And sound returned to the world. By the time I opened my eyes the birds had flown away, and the squirrel had climbed his tree, but in the distance I saw another squirrel, and I even glimpsed a fawn through the underbrush. Birds were singing, the wind was howling through the branches, and I heard my class farther along the trail, people talking over the crunching of dead leaves beneath their feet.

I’d always wanted to be special, to have a superpower. Now that I finally had one, I knew I would never use it. Except maybe when I have a test to study for.