Art

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and into the sewers. Another component of the city's sludge. One more or one less would make no difference.

Her grandmother had once been a young girl, pregnant and unmarried. She had been frightened because it was her first time and because she thought her father would shoot her. She had wanted to run away from her own body. But she was a gypsy, born beside a caravan, rocked in a horse collar, and suckled by a mare. She eloped with one of her suitors and raised the baby, proud and strong.

The mattress groaned as Jhenny let her body droop across it. She stared at the light fixture on the ceiling until she saw spots of blue and purple. Then she flicked off the light. Darkness sank in around her eyes. Her mind numbed and she dozed.

In the morning, she made a cup of coffee and sat down to drink it. Her hair was rumpled with sleep and her eyes circled with grey ashes. Jhenny felt old. She was not a gypsy.