

## THE PIANO

Millie winds back the clock.  
She wants to alter time,  
cleanse time, start again,  
like spring-cleaning the whole house.

She did that once, took all the furniture out of the house and put it on the front lawn next to the stunted azaleas. She did have some trouble with the piano but in the end she did manage it on her own. Resourceful. She dragged it down the hallway with an unexpected strength, scouring deep scratches in Jeff's polished boards. He'd never know now.

Once the house was free, she had spent the day on her hands and knees scrubbing until everything sparkled. She didn't finish until late afternoon but it wasn't as if she was expecting Jeff home for dinner, was she? Then she returned all the furniture, chairs, tables and even Jeff's stretch-back armchair where it belonged. Apart from the piano. She liked the way it crouched now under the sycamore tree like a friendly animal. It looked at home there and felt like a symbol of her new life. Millie had to rush a bit in the end because it looked like rain.

Now she had a clean house, she thought she'd like to do the same with her mind, put all the memories out on the front lawn and clean out all those dark, cobwebby corners that had built up over the years.

Then maybe she'd feel like a new woman. Come to think of it, maybe she could try a woman instead of a man next time around. She did feel like a cup of tea however but then maybe she was just conjuring up a dramatic interlude like writers do when they are faced with a blank page. Have the hero make a cup of tea or have a man walk through the door with a gun.

Jeff didn't have a gun when he walked through the door but he sure had a very bad temper. Something in her snapped (as they say in good detective stories) and she found the strength somehow. A bit like moving that piano. It wasn't so hard once you'd made up your mind. Anyway life was impossible without leaving a few scratches on the polished boards. She wasn't perfect.

She'd start again. Maybe a woman would be less trouble than a man, certainly tidier and less sloppy. But women were human beings too and that was always a bit of a disadvantage and humans were all she currently had to choose from. Millie had never been abducted by a UFO full of aliens so she had limited knowledge of their partnering potential. Come to think of it, she'd never even seen a UFO but she had seen flashing lights above the rotary clothes line the night she'd staggered into the backyard after Jeff had thumped her in the head for changing channels without his permission. She could hardly have expected a UFO to rescue her then and take her away from all this at her age. That's why she had taken matters into her own hands. Yes these same piano-shifting, "hear me roar, I am woman" hands.

She'd not known her own strength. You never did until you were forced to sometimes. She'd even dug the hole herself but she'd hated digging up the iris bulbs. They were just about to flower with their lovely, plump, purple buds about to burst. But they'd be sure to be plumper and bigger next year.

Millie winds back the clock  
Millie winds back her life  
She's young again.  
Mille starts again.  
(Maybe she'll learn the piano)