

I am the gargoyle on top of the roof. My granite toes curl around the southwest corner of an old-style city building, as I peer over the ledge and down fourteen stories to the hustle and bustle of your life.

I am old, beginning to crumble. Cracks run up and down like delicate spiderwebs, but the damage goes deep inside. My vision fragments as the cracks split my stone eyes.

After some time, industrious lichen began growing in the folds of my stone form, spotting my deep grey skin with a fuzzy green, protecting me from harsh winds. My more intricate details begin to erode. My eyelids merge with my eyes, my teeth are blunted, the folds of my ears disappear. Vines have climbed up the side of my building and are curling around my toes. The first few that try are shredded by my claws, but they're resilient, and soon the leafy greens are twining around my ankles.

The vines have reached my knees. In spring, the vines bloom, and purple flowers cover the face of my building. At sunrise and sunset, when the soft pale light streams through the delicate arrangement of leaves, petals, and stem, a divine hand seems to paint the world in alternating patterns of light, shadow, and color. It's really quite beautiful.

I'll miss it when I'm gone. I want to cry when the harsh heat of the summer withers the blooms and curled-up, burnt tissue falls to the earth like rain. When autumn comes, rain streaks down my face like tears.

In winter, the green leaves and purple flowers have all gone, its beauty stripped away. All that remains is the pale wood of the vines. Although its foliage is missing, its strange strength remains, and some days I wonder if, without its miraculous tenacity, I would fall to the ground in jagged hunks of stone.

This winter is a long one, yet it flies by all too quickly. Irrationally, I have tied my own welfare to that of this simple vine. If it is truly dying, so am I. If this winter really is my last, I want to savor its sweetness and its pains. I want the world to stop turning so I can absorb the sights, the sounds, the scents, the colors, at my leisure, soak them into my stone.

But when spring comes again, I understand. Once more my world is transformed into a vision of deep green and violet. Huge swaths of brick and mortar disappear under its indomitable spirit. I am surrounded by blossoms of hope. Pollinators dance inside its tangle and return often. Songbirds flock around me. Bees build their nests between my teeth, and I hold them gently in my jaw, careful not to crush them. At night, moths emerge in flocks from the shelter it provides, and I watch them journey to the soft light of the stars and the moon, again and again.

Slowly, gently, this miracle draws together our lonely city.