

1975

# The Named Thing

Angela Carter

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Nosferatu always attends  
his own obsequies.

After a search in some foul-smelling outhouses, he discovered his bicycle and, abandoning his holiday, rode directly to Bucharest where, at the post-restante, he found a telegram summoning him to rejoin his regiment at once; history asserted itself. Much later, when he changed back into uniform in his quarters, he discovered he still had the Countess' sad rose, he'd tucked it into the breast pocket of his tweed cycling jacket. Curiously enough, the flower did not seem quite dead and, on impulse, because the girl had been so lovely and her heart-attack so unexpected and pathetic, he decided to try to resurrect the rose; he filled his tooth-glass with water from the carafe on his locker and popped the rose into it, so that its shaggy head floated on the top.

When he returned from the mess that evening, the heavy fragrance of Count Nosferatu's roses drifted down the stone corridor of the barracks to greet him, and his spartan quarters brimmed lasciviously with the reeling odour of a glowing, velvet, monstrous flower whose petals had regained all their former bloom and elasticity, their corrupt and brilliant splendour.

Next day, his regiment embarked for France.

## The Named Thing

Though it is picked perfectly clean and bleached  
to an austere pallor by the elements the skull  
speaks in an emblematic language made up from  
the slow accretions of imagery in time; the  
voice of the skull, in its noisy silence, sug-  
gests the instinctive integrations by which  
the named thing remains unknowable or, at least,  
only known by name, and earth will always clog  
the eyes of this image since the image is syn-  
onymous with the named thing,  
isn't it?

## Reflections

I was walking in a wood one late spring day of skimming cloud and shower-tarnished sunshine, the sky a lucid if intermittent blue—cool, bright, tremulous weather. A *coloratura* blackbird perched on a bough curded with