Miss White was a peculiar woman— the sort of woman who was a superlative source of commotion wherever she went. Despite her condition, she didn't hesitate to immix with the world when she so desired. She did not favor attention, nor did she strive to be inconspicuous. It was almost meritorious the way she ambled along her route, going about her business in a stoical, shameless way, completely incognizant (or so it seemed) of the tumult she left in her wake.

However, Miss White was a most observant being. With her wrinkled, squinted eyes staring straight ahead, an onlooker (if one so dared to stare at her long enough) would diagnose her amaurotic. Still she managed to notice every piddling detail in a dandelion growing through the sidewalk chinks, or the sideways glances thrown at her, or the exact position of a cloud's shadow over her small hometown. At every slight noise, the overgrown white hairs in her ears grabbed at the sound like claws and committed it to memory. Indeed she was a macabre character.

When she was just a pigtailed head in grade school, her classmates would tease her about her name—White—correlating her name with the freakish paleness, practically albinic lackluster of her skin. Now, in her old age, Miss White could only compare her name with the same pallid dullness that haunted her dreams, and the sense of the Beyond that was approaching like a red deadline on her calendar. She was old, no doubt. She felt it. The constant cold, the ceaseless arthritis in her joints. The weariness that even the simplest of movements induced. And with the
growing awareness of these inconveniences also grew an urgency inside her. *Hurry! hurry*, her
gut seemed to buzz continuously. There was only one daily moment that she could look forward
too, because it brought total relief from her weariness and, in all actuality, made her feel
effervescent: Night. At these times, Miss White was indefatigable despite lack of sleep. Her
senses were heightened. Her adrenaline-rinsed body performed without flaw or pain. But most of
all, her mind no longer was groggy, and lurid spirit sprouted from her typically granite aura.
From the dim luminance of the flagitious moon emerged her happiest, most baneful form. She
would fetch her butcher knife when the surrounding life grew dusky and appease her sharp
vindictiveness inside. In two or three days, she would show up at the funeral, clad entirely and
modestly in black— the only time she sought to be present, but invisible.

Her targets were by no means random— contrary to the rash claims of the headlines. Her
ears were her most keen sense for a reason-- they picked up the words that initially condemned
her victims. Whispers intimating her grotesqueness that were murmured from across the grocery
store could be heard by Miss White as if they were shouted in her ear. They did not hurt. No,
they did not pain her; she did not lament those criticisms, nor cry over the hideousness of her
puffy yet somehow sagging cheeks, nor did she brood over her shapeless, scarred brow or the
unfair disproportion of her body. What did she do? She shrugged and took down the name. And
that person, no matter his or her age, was added to her To Do list. Each night before she left her
house, by now with the muteness of an iterated dance through the leaves, she polished her mirror
and regarded her image— a reminder of the aching cavils in the life she possessed for only a
while longer-- the rationale behind what she was about to complete again. She glanced at her list:
only two goals left needing perfection. Steeled in her resolve, Miss White embarked on the final steps of her quest.

~•~

When Miss White got back to her home, she prepared herself immediately, but without haste. Her gut was no longer clenched with appetite for rapidity. She sighed, satisfied. She was ready. Everything on her list had been carried out precisely as she had been planning since she was a little girl on the playground. Miss White recalled all too well how beautiful Mary Eden's taunting songs had trumpeted in her ear, as pretty little queens with forged delicate noses and plastic high cheekbones repeated a dance around her. The cheery tune and well-worn lyrics came back to her now....

"Sight White,

And even the night

Would cry at her hideous looks.

Maybe she'd be

Of slight use to this world,

If she were at least better with books."

.... But those days were the tide, and tonight they crashed against the shore and washed Mary out to sea.

~•~

"Good God!" Exclaimed a young, dumbfounded policeman as he stared at the creature laying on the floor, perfectly poised, eyes open and blank, toes pointed heavenward, with a butcher knife cradled like a claret rose in her hands. "This is the murderer?" His partner came
over and peered at the corpse briefly, before turning away from the cold empty stare of her red-
black pupils.

"Yup. That's It," and his partner gave a low whistle.

The first man, still entranced with the Medusa-like qualities of the woman, spoke in a
perplexed, yet sad tone, "How could an old lady like her evade all of our precautions? The
curfew? The nightly patrols? The locked windows and bolted doors of everyone in this God-
forsaken town?"

"I couldn't tell ya," said the second, shrugging. "At least it's over now. All the horror she
caused everyone. It's all over." But the first couldn't tell if his partner meant the horror of all the
people she left with a bloody gorge in their hearts, or the horror of catching a glimpse of her at
the market, or the coffee shop, the corner of a park, or on the front porch of her little home—
always passive, always silent. They both stared at her a moment longer, in either pity or
nauseation, before getting to work bringing the body to the morgue. Neither noticed the papers
taped to the only unbroken and untarnished mirror in the entire house. "To Do~" was scrawled
across the top of each page in swooping, perfect cursive. The paper was a dull gray-white with
faint watercolor scenes of springtime in the background. The numbers 1-66 where spaced
vertically down the sheets, followed by a name and address. Number 67 was written on a
separate page, centered, baring a single word. Die.

Later, the medical examiners would attribute her death to "old age." They found no
poison in her system, no bullet in her head, no blade in her rib cage. But of course, how could
they find the poison in her brain, the 66 bullets in her heart, or the blade that severed her spirit?