

When the Last Humans Left

The campus is quiet this morning as I make my way to the office.

It's still dark, and blessedly peaceful.

I breathe deeply, inhaling the serenity of this place.

As I exhale, I hear quick movement in the brush.

I catch my breath.

Is that the fox?

I've been looking for him since we've been back on campus--

for that sly old devil who paraded through the Quad during the pandemic.

Brazen.

Daring a challenge.

We are old friends, he and I.

We watched together

admiring (me)

and calculating (him)

as the graceful (and grateful?) deer

made their way up from the waterfront to reclaim their territory.

We watched as they lounged on the shaded hill with Roger

and devoured

every single red tulip

triumphantly blooming on campus.

The world had fundamentally changed, and the fox and I together bore witness.

Nature reasserted herself when the last humans left.

And it was beautiful.