

The photos of her body arrived in Christian's mailbox the morning after a full moon. He had no work that day, and so he managed to catch his mail before it had fully managed its way to rest against the metal walls of the vertical box. He leafed through the envelopes, dropped the technology catalogue where he stood in the stairway, and noticed the too-long manila envelope toward the back of the pile. It was the kind of thing legal offices used, for which the paper had to be folded once vertically to be made to fit, and the addresses on the outside of this one were handwritten in a broad black ink. His address looked strange in all capital letters, and he couldn't be sure of the handwriting as a result.

Now here Christian sat, on the mandatory rug in the main room of his apartment, and around him in a kind of antique-clock pattern were 12, eight-by-ten, matte finished and sepia toned photographs of Bijoux's body. Here was a frame that encased her entire right leg, buttock and lower spine, taken from behind. He turned and saw once again the close-up of her pubic wedge, grainy, like a National Geographic picture of our rapidly shrinking rain forests. He wondered if it might not be an enlargement, a detail from a more generic shot. None of them exposed her face, or even her head. Under his left hand was the photograph of Bijoux's shoulder, collar and neck, all seemingly splayed out at obtuse angles. The way the photographs had been taken, Bijoux's body looked like a corpse.

Christian had just spoken with her ten days ago, in the morning before work, he kept recalling to himself.

It was strange for him to recognize a person by their body alone, but he reasoned that if he could do this for anyone, it would be his Bijoux. What was more strange, odd enough to even overpower the sense of recognition infused in every captured piece of her, was the awareness he had: She would never, ever allow herself to be photographed like this. Not her; not if she could have anything to say about it.

There was no note with the package, and the return address was nonsense. It was a fraction of a nursery rhyme, with numbers thrown in for realism, it seemed. Christian was beginning to shake, but he didn't know it yet, focused as he was on the effort of squeezing his brain for a drip of inspiration. Under his left hand the photo wriggled in sympathy and blood pounded loud in his ears.

The return address read:

**BE. WARETHE JABBERWOCK MYSON
3438 THECLAWSTHAT CATCH
BEWARETHEJUB #JUBBIRD-ANDSHUN
THEFRUMIO, US 10 49**

What did it mean?

The address, the rhymes, the photographs, the day he received them and the ominous postmark—what did it all mean? He squinted hard and the blood pounding in his ears emitted powerful spurts around his brain. He had to think, and this was an effort. It was eleven o'clock. He could just barely justify taking another dose now.