

the sisters

Outside the house, the painted clapboard walls
Are peeling. Strips of weathered green curl up
And fall, revealing old grey wood beneath.
The house has stood like that for many years,
Surviving summer after summer. Go
Inside and you can see the evidence.
The sunlight drifting in the windows each
And every year has faded all the once-
Bright colors, and the rooms which used to be
Quite cheerful years ago are drained and pale,
The furniture, the walls, the floors, and rugs,
All old and brown. In here the Sisters lived.
The two of them were just as much a part
Of their old house as all the rooms, and like
The rooms, they faded as the years advanced.
They grew all white and soft, like fish that swim
Through murky caves beneath the sea, away
From bright, harsh light. The sun's rays, filtered
Through the dusty, old, lace curtains, or the bulb
A small, brass Cupid brandishes atop
The heavy newel-post, gave all the light
They needed. So the Sisters lived from year
To year, and sat, and talked, and dallied, and
Persisted in their house, and faded with
The rooms. Now one is gone. The other one
Still fades away, but has not disappeared.

— robert harris