Here, flowers don't bloom; they die. Lincoln Heights is the place where dreams come to perish, the final resting place of the not yet dead. But the residents rise anyway. They rise out of mildewed mattresses in shanty towns, out of broken homes and fragmented hearts. They rise not because of the sun, but in spite of it.

Families in tattered clothing lined the streets of the urban cemetery, waiting for their next meal. Flies swarmed about the rank breed, praying on their victims— the not yet dead. A sickly boy in a shredded tunic pulled at the seams of his mother’s coat.

“Mama, when are we gonna eat?”

“When the nice man opens up them doors, we gonna get all them left over rich people food. We gonna eat us a banquet.”

“What if he don't open them doors,” asked the boy.

“He gonna open ‘em, I promise.”

“But what if he don't, mama?”

“Quiet, you,” she snapped. The boy’s mother gave a hesitant glance behind her.

“Now you listen up. We gonna eat one way or another, we jus’ gotta be patient. So jus’ sit by that can over there and mind yourself now.”

Gray clouds began to converge on the morning sky. The threat of rain caused no hesitation among the abysmal group— no one was leaving, no one was relinquishing their chance for a feast. Men and women sat slumped against the side of the building, waiting for signs of movement from within the doors while children writhed in hunger and impatience. The dank and moldy walls provided no relief for the beggars from the impending storms. But it wasn't too much, it was necessary. Braving the forces of nature had become part of the people of Lincoln Heights. It was built into their genes that
whatever omnipotent deity ruled the realms of heaven and earth was actively seeking the ruin of souls. They didn't worship gods of idols, praise spirits, or sing to the glory of omens. The people of Lincoln Heights venerated each passing day, drawing from each hour the strength to spite Mother Nature, to show her that they were not going anywhere.

Morning passed and noon came, drawing from the clouds a heavy rain. But the people of Lincoln Heights didn't cower in shame—they stood taller for their noble cause, honored that Mother Nature had chosen for them nothing short of destruction, and yet she had failed to ruin the least among them. The rain wasn't their enemy, it was their validation. It was a sign for them that their struggles were duly noted and of the most valiant cause. The beggars turned toothless grins towards the heavens, mocking the rain. They welcomed the rain like a sick man welcomes death—with clearness of conscience and self satisfaction.

By mid afternoon the weight of the rain was unbearable. Each drop fell heavier upon the abysmal group. But the people of Lincoln Heights continued to stand. They stood taller with each passing rain drop. They stood out of spite for a life not meant for them. They stood until the doors were opened to a victorious banquet.