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I save the weather up to tell him. How the breeze flutters cherry blossoms. It's always warm in his room so I like rain, when I can bring that, or hints of frost. Maybe he wants to remember what it feels like to come inside from the cold. He blinks once, yes. We're polite now. It's what we have.

After the accident, when they thought he would die, the nurse told me to keep talking. Hearing is the last to go, she said, and I sat by his bed and talked for thirty-six hours. I stitched him to the world with my voice. Don't even think about leaving me, I said. Tough and bitchy, the way he liked me once.

Answered Prayers

I see you at the St. Jude's carnival. It smells like peanut allergy. You are three but look eighty. Bald heads, burned faces: no one minds my old man son. We ride the tilt-a-whirl, eat corn dogs. No one gives me a medal. No one says, how brave of you to keep him.

Ordinary Day, with Spin Art

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Who's The Skirt?

Mini Stories

Kathryn Kulpa © 2014

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Donations Greatly Appreciated



The napkins are those shiny maroon kind that don't absorb spills, just push them around, and free breakfast is three kinds of Danish and mini muffins but all he can eat is saltine crackers with butter, the perfect hangover food, and it's Las Vegas and he's married to his best friend but he can't look at her, and he's watching the red-haired waitress bending so gracefully to pick up a fork and her bra shows, it's pink, and he watches his wife of eleven hours watching the waitress with the same look of useless longing that must be on his own face and he remembers them at nineteen, spending the night in the old boy scout tent in his backyard, lying like sardines with her feet next to his head, talking into the humid air, and how much closer he felt to her then, and it's Las Vegas and Elvis is on the Muzak and he's caught in a trap, Elvis is singing, he can't walk out.

Continental Breakfast

Because his mother is Catholic and he may be, too, subliminally. Because nothing binds like a double helix. Because angry condom factory workers do it anyway, to one in every thousand: you read that somewhere. Because accidents will happen. Because you've never had anyone or anything that was truly yours and had to love you. Because that includes him.

Pinhole

Maybelline

Saw two girls trying on makeup and thought of our black eyeliner days, we'd melt the tip with our lighters— we liked everything black, black coffee, black tights, black clove cigarettes—riding in black cars, trading mix tapes for gas money, letting the phone ring and ring, ignoring lost loves left behind at bus stops.

Short Drawer

So, he tells me in the break room, we can skip the police and settle this fully as a company matter, so I say yes, that, what you said. I'm watching his finger flipping the zipper on his fly, breathing through my mouth – his breath smells like meat – thinking yes, I really need this job.