

The Winter Bees

1.

The storm window dropped again, releasing heat to melt the inner side of an ice dam collecting atop the window frame. This is how the birds got in two years ago—the window slips like a vertebral disc losing shock absorption, capturing flutterations and screen pings in between our bedroom and the outside world. Drips leak with sporadic indecision, creating pools of cold, filthy water the birds might have relished in summer. Unmanicured fingertips skim the water as if to remind themselves it is still February.

2.

Downstairs in the kitchen, after starting the coffee, I remove a large baking dish from the sink. Leftover noodles from last night's meal, now wet and pasty, rim a corner. I scrape the remains, drop them in the sink, and watch them slip into the drain. A butter knife is caught in the sinkerator, clanging and jumping, eager to escape the tiny indentations carving into cheap stainless steel. I quickly flip the switch downward.

3.

Towels, no longer thick or soft, are tri-folded and carried upstairs to the bureau in the bathroom. Atop the dark stained surface next to a small hand-made bowl are one, two, three dead bees, curled in a fetal position, wings clipped or broken, brittle as my grandmother's spine. Their yellow stripes faded. If I attempt to pick one up between my fingertips I am sure its delicate body will crumble into ash. I am tired. I cannot think about last spring, my own body crimped, lying in the tub, waiting for the shower to run cold.



ABOUT HEATHER J. MACPHERSON

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