FLASH FICTION

Dovetail

by Chelsea Allen



"Reaching for the Sun" by Chynna Williams

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This is again my summer of space. Space sleeping between me and the wall, twisting and turning and wailing right until the dawn lilac. Space taking short naps in its crib, where the small lights fly down from the shuffling leaves, drift across along with the small shadows.

People come over. We have dinner on the patio. I crack, crack, crack my egg and scoop its insides, devour its world, let its orange spill out and stain the milk white cotton. When I finish, I take another, and then another. All dinner, I eat eggs. I'm wearing a turtleneck in place of a sundress. Some stop their laughter, some their arguments, when the orange runs across the table to them. Some come gather around my chair and hold my face and look at it, stuffed, puffed on both sides like a cartoon bunny. I try to smile. They do not understand this face, and so their touch remains light and their gaze hard. Hard to understand space. After I swallow, I withdraw my face from their hands, scoop up another spoonful, and smile widely, which makes them all smile widely.

When they leave, the blue returns as at dawn. The moon rests quietly in a clearing between the shuffling leaves. I lie on the freshly rained-on earth, digging into the cool mud until it fills my nails. You can come now, fill my eyes. And now the fireflies. They drift over my body, flying high and sometimes low, so low that their wings brush against my skin, but then they never sit, never crawl up on my arms. I know why they're afraid of me. They fly high again. I don't know why they keep their light so close, never lighting anything else. I say, *Come*. I say, *I won't devour you.* And when they come close, I open my mouth — now they don't disappoint. They swarm in illimitably, nibble on my tongue, my gums, try to suck milk from my teeth. I keep my mouth wide open. And more, more swarm in until they're packed compactly like bees in a beehive, and I'm smiling, laughing even, and the golden light from my mouth streams up and lights the shuffling leaves, like a sun underground.

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