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Last Year Our Building Broke In Half

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LAST YEAR OUR BUILDING BROKE IN HALF

Rooms split open; tenants scurried behind the remaining chairs like creatures from a damp log. Hanging our feet over the fourth floor, we ate lunch and watched the network of lines and wires that made us functional swing from the raw walls. For years they had held the building up against the waterfront wind; their sparks warmed our tea.

We stayed on half rent, living a cross-sectional study. A social worker charted our meat and fish dinners, quarrels, hours at television and books, how we adapted to a broken home, half a table, half a bed. We warmed ourselves between small fires and shortened our lives to half days and half nights. We learned to balance on the open edge of the living room with the torn electric wires creaking near us in the wind and we did not fall off.