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Surface Damage

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Surface Damage

The seeds clung to the inside of the spoon. She had to shake them off.

He sat down at the table.

She ran her fingers around and around the top of the glass.

"Stop that." He salted the melon.

She picked up what had spilled and threw it over her shoulder.

"Now you just have to pick it up off the floor," he said.

She looked out the window. The woman next door was hanging laundry. The wind caught it, spinning it like a carousel.

*

She dragged the broom, catching the light before it hit the hardwood.

"You're just spreading it around." He walked to the truck. "That's the thing . . . it just moves on to something else."

He looked at her through the tiny crosses of the screen, "It'll come back. It always does."

*

She beat rugs until the light was turgid.

The woman came over. "Dirt is blowing on my laundry."

Her children ran around in circles, faster and faster just to fall down laughing.

"Thought you was a dust devil." She smiled. "We used to have them bad around here. But your're too young to remember. Took off all the top soil. Couldn't plant nothing." She walked off, one foot in front of the other.

*

Back inside, she realized she was hungry. She went to the refrigerator and drew out her untouched melon. The top layer was all dried out but underneath it was still soft and sweet.

*

He came home from work at lunch time.

She looked up, surprised.

"Afraid you'd left me."

She shook her head, waxing stubbornly, around and around until the wood shone like obsidian.