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Folk Tales

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Victoria Rostovich

Folk Tales

I. A Love Story

He stood just outside the door, watching her
equilibrium run low.

The moon is hanging and that's a good omen. The
stars
have fallen on them hundreds of times. The hot
shadow
from the tea cup, grays and grazes the carpet which
he
hadn't stood on for a while. How long had it been
since
he'd stooped while passing through her doorframe?
So
long since he last heard the drum roll of her fingers
on his backbone. The moment when he should press
his
hand over her mouth soon became evident to both.
It's
rare that openings ever present themselves as any
thing
but the first bees of April. Something must happen
soon.
His hand must eventually detach itself and make a
gesture.
Run the index finger from her bottom lip to the
center
of her breastbone. Who can stay still? Who's
moving?

II. Resources

It has been hotter since we plastered the front yard,
so hot
the old ones on the stumps ask for more water than
usual.

The flower gardens are losing their lustrous red; the
greens
are fading to pastels. Three men and I sat on a
bench, under
a tree, during the storms. I only want the melody of
their
questions, weaving with the thunder, repeated daily
in my head.
They wanted to drink then and there. They asked
permission to
catch the downpour in their mouths. They were free
to choose.

For our lives to go someplace wet, I have to drive a
truck
made from gold, at least gold-plated on the surfaces.
The old
ones who own the truck are in possession of custard
powder, and,
at times, concentrated fish sauce, to flavor their main
staple—
grains. I need to get some water to them soon,
before they get
bored with hunger, before they get angry and plant
land mines in
the riverbed. Spite is action but not solution. But,
they are
free to choose. I didn't go down for it too well when
I lost
time carrying water with those who abandoned me,
out of spite,

and left me wandering. I told them if I got lost one
more time,
and if I lost my occupation, I would become a pagan,
a rebel,
a guerrilla. I told them only the children deserve the
water,
and I could take away the water, the grain and
flower seeds,
and the children. I told them, of course, they were
free to
choose in this, and all matters. Resolution seems
probable.