

In Her Grandmother's Room

The last thing she found was an apron
balled tight and stuffed behind the stove,
pitiful strings crinkled,
a weight of sooty grease welding
the fabric to the floor.

This meticulous kitchen —
each draw relined each year
each bit of linen refolded to ward off
the curse of crease —
where no one dared to spill,
or sigh as a cup of bitter tea
followed a stifled tale of heart break
down the drain. A drop of honey, a drop of anger
both invited vermin.

No one would have seen her yank the perfect bow,
wrench some crushing pain from kitchen sanctuary
and stuff it in a winding sheet of flowering percale.
She saw her now, but only rising afterward
turning to select another apron from a scented draw.
She saw her smooth the apron front, and one or two
bold strands of hair, then let the kitchen door swing
shut behind her, silent on its gleaming hinge.

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