

## Green Bank Grasping

We growl at the fridge and the fridge moans back. The fridge opens its door and tries to snap at our hands but we have it cornered in the kitchen, and when Zack sneaks back and rips out the plug its poor light fades and its face turns grey; a warming body of boxed-up death. We drag its corpse and coffin down the hallway, out the door and over to the tangled bank that rubs up against our yard. In our garden, the lawn is prim and polite, each blade waiting for the others to speak, but on the bank there are hordes of weeds wrestling. So many stems tussling for light; a riot of plants dug in along the old rivulet where no-one pulls or sprays, next to the highway that's always calling to us, sad and sure. A lost jungle, veins of lush growth mined for green by those who can't find it in their own trees.

For us: a dumping ground. Over the fridge goes, crashing down the side of the hill, cartwheeling through the raised carpet till it plugs in the roots of willow baleen straining the water for great tree whales. The roots soak up the crumbs, the mould and the steel. The trees grow taller. The weeds around the fridge unrumple and stretch out their arms. The fridge isn't the first thing to tumble down. Banana skins and old crusts. Lawn clippings, spent tomato plants. Unread books and wrinkled shirts. Newspapers and magazines. The Jack Russell when he went under the Toyota; Zack put the car into neutral and heaved it off the bank too. It all gets covered by the throng of cleavers and scarlet pimpernel, hemlock, elder, so many weeds like crazed writing choking light from a blank page.

It had all started pretty slow. Something every week, then every day, but after the fridge we just keep going: an old couch, the flat screen TV, the itchy blanket we use when winter tries to snap at our feet. The ache in my left foot. The tar in Zack's lungs. A rusty knife we bought because it was rusty. The wooden coat-hangers that don't fit. My mother-in-law, the weather. An earring I lost years ago but somehow manage to fling off the edge. Soon it gets hard to decide what to dump next. We argue. I want weeds, all weeds sprouting everywhere, for all time. Zac wants roads, every road paving the ground in smooth lies. He's still upset about the dog but it's not his turn. We yell as the song of the highway drones, throw whatever is left in the house at each other, out the windows and down the bank. Our last precious things: my engagement ring, Zack's photo with his brother. It goes till the house is emptied and it's just us collapsed against a mattress on the bedroom floor.

I seethe through the night, sleeping and waking; sneak out late when the blankets doze. The air is cold and quiet. Something has changed. I run back to the house for a torch and hurry back to the bank, feet damp with cool dew. When I throw the torch down the slope it wobbles through the air and light bounces off the tarmac that now covers everything, great slopes of road that pave the tangle down; the weeds, the trees and the forgotten rivulet. I look back at the house, see Zack in the doorway. He's a silhouette; like the night, like a dark road swelling in the doorframe.

I rip out a dandelion, blow out the seeds, and jump.