

Kinky Eggs

by Beth Thomas

Every morning, Ann reaches to turn on the stove, reading the labels as if she's never seen them before. Right-front, left-rear, left-front, right-rear. She places a pan, lights the appropriate fire. She plucks two eggs from the carton, weighs and measures them with the cup of her palm, the curve of her fingers. She raises them to her lips briefly before tapping them, inserting her thumb, and emptying their contents into the pan. She licks her lips at the steam, the sizzle.

Across the room, the baby swing mobile plays a soothing oceanic shushing sound; the baby asleep, rocking to a quiet tick tock tick tock. The plastic aquarium scene pulsates blue then pink, to the time of its insistent rhythmic shushing.

On the fire, the eggs set, flawless orbs of yellow on white. Ann adds salt, sugar, and mouths leftover grains from her fingertips. The baby fusses quietly; Ann's milk collects at the ready. There is a whisper of condensation on the stovetop's hood, which she fingers away, reluctant to turn on the noisy fan, and a likewise murmur of wetness between her legs, remembered and beloved. She reaches to turn the burner off, her hand slow on the dial, waiting for the precise moment when things go from not ready to ready.

