Flight

by billy robinson

Another bird hits the large plate glass patio doors as I am sipping my morning coffee. DOA, no doubt. My neighbor tells me he has the same problem with his large A-framed windows, but sometimes they're not killed, just stunned, and you have to wait a bit. I have yet to see it. I always have to get out the sweeper and sweep the dead bird off the deck. And this summer seems to be worse than any previous---two blue jays, two robins and a yellow finch. I once asked Maggie if she was a bird and another bird was coming directly at her, wouldn't she have the sense to get out of the way? Maybe they deserve it for being so stupid. Maggie frowned at me, but how else is it going to sink in? Thousands of years from now birds will be spared plate glass tragedies due to the lessons learned today.

Maggie just wanted me to change the doors, or put blinds on them. And I meant to. I always meant to.

I call her sometimes but she won't answer the phone. I leave messages. I've been looking at blinds, I tell the machine, on-line, but also at Blinds-To-Go. Venetian, Holland, Roman, wood, plastic or metal. Did you know there were so many choices out there? I always end asking her to reconsider, feeling a bit hopeful. It doesn't last. I'm the one who fucked things up. It's a fact I've been coming to acknowledge slowly.

Time has been passing slowly, too, but lately I've been spending some of it secretly eyeing this woman in my office building. She reminds me of Maggie, though they don't look the same. Maybe because she's a woman. Pretty, too, in an approachable way. I see her in the food court. The way she scoops her spoon into her noodled soup, it's like she's dipping her toe into a summer lake. The other day I passed her with my tray of enchilada and bean dip and nodded a polite hello. She nodded back, then smiled gently. I said to

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myself that if I see her today I will ask her if she knows anything about blinds.

It's a yellow finch. A baby. Poor thing. I give it a minute, just like my neighbor said, but then I have to go get the sweeper. When I come back I open the patio door and to my delight the bird is on its two little feet, shaking it off.