

FLY

by Elaine Chiew

The light hurts my eyes, she says.

She turns her back to me on the bed, and her shoulder blades shift and jut towards me with aerodynamic lift — nubbin wings so slim, so sharp, so beautiful, they would carry her airborne.

She wanted to have our children in this house. She knows this house like no other, the creak on the third bottom step, the jammed bathroom drawer, the splintering dowel. I watch her mounded belly rise with her breaths. Yesterday afternoon, we finally broke down the crib and mobile with its symphony of light and motion. I chopped down the treehouse I built the day we moved here. Took down the hammock, the spice rack, the antique lamp fixtures we installed because we thought our children would have children here. We removed everything that hadn't been repossessed, that we could still call ours.

Once, when I told her I have unquenchable thirst, she laughed without humor. All the water in the world won't satisfy you then, she said.

Is there no cure?

What's the cure for greed, she said. Loss smokes her eyes.

Our last night here. The windowpanes are lit just enough by the sodium glare of the streetlights outside that I can see our two silhouettes -- sleek, dark lines mounting each other like tectonic plates grating underneath the earth's molten crust.

Afterwards, she runs the tap in the sink. Brushes her teeth and pees in the toilet. She comes back and draws the curtains, so that our room is now pitch black. I don't see her come back to my side. But I feel her all down my right side — the weight of her body settling down beside me, into that warm indentation she'd made, perfect for one.

In the dark, I can still hear the tap trickling. Water running in an unquenchable stream from the faucet, and the world souging through its spilling commentary.

I get up to turn it off. There they lie on the edge of the porcelain sink, her ovaries, curled like blackened apostrophes.

