

Bibliophagy

by Kirsty Logan

#1. The Time He Hid The Words In The Footwell Of The Car

he knows that his wife knows. she can smell the adverbs on his tongue in the mornings. but he cannot get through another evening in that house without consonants. his daughter sits in her wardrobe dappling the edge of a razor along her inner arm; the tissues stain the toilet bowl pink. his son blows up airports and builds towns full of women with beachball breasts and men with wings covered in black boils. his wife stutters home from work with arms full of carrier bags and frowns at the tiles he spent all day gluing to the walls of the vestibule: red and blue roses with thorns as big as dragons' teeth. they are the wrong colour. he knows it. she keeps frowning. he says that he will go to the 24-hour hardware shop to get the right tiles and walks down the garden path swinging his keyring around his finger and whistling the theme tune from a TV programme and he drives his car around the block and parks under a sycamore which gently vomits leaves onto the roof and lies down on the back seat and reaches into the footwell and brings up handfuls of words and he closes his eyes and he swallows them.

#2. The Time He Hid The Words At The Back Of The Fridge

in the vegetable drawer. behind the onions. far enough past their best that no-one will pull them out for spag bol but not old enough to be binned. the words will be safe there, cushioned by the softening onions, silenced by their papery skins. he feigns deep breathing until the moon has settled above the skylight, then slips from under his wife's arm. standing pigeon-toed and bruise-kneed in the light from the fridge, his neck finally stops twitching. the words are waiting, cold as milk. when he reaches for the words he feels his heels already beginning to rise, already beginning to lift him higher, beginning to move him up up up. he turns away so that the moon is hidden behind next door's chimney. he lifts the words. he shudders

to think how smooth the vowels will feel along his oesophagus. he swallows.

#3. The Time He Hid The Words In The Toes Of His Dress Shoes
it is getting more difficult. his arms are in slings after he fell off the roof trying to talk to the disappearing moon. his children will not hold his gaze. sometimes he gets up at dawn to go into the woods and take off all his clothes and wait to freeze, but he never makes it past the end of the road. when he gets home his hands shake too much to hold his morning coffee. he loves his children but they are not verbs. they are only pronouns and he is a fragment. he is surrounded by the dregs of words and no matter how many he swallows he cannot focus on the moon. he plants unsteady kisses on his family's foreheads. he climbs the stairs and crawls into his wardrobe. he lifts his shoes and stares at the sickly tangle of consonants. this is the last, he says, and he swallows.

