

20 & 21

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20.

The child moves a fire engine back and forth across a kitchen floor.

From a chair, an old man says: I want to tell you things you do not know.

When they came, we were children fed reassuring stories and sent into battle. I thought it an adventure. We streamed toward each other from all sides taking impossibly long strides over the pastry grass patched with confectioner's sugar because gravity had leaked away.

When we reached them we stopped. We looked at their machines and had no idea what to do. Then the ground exploded and everything went black.

The old man is silent.

The machines overhead are sent to watch us. They have sensors that search for types of movement. When they find that movement, they attack.

We changed how we live so as to not provoke them. We tried to avoid mistakes. But we did not know what a mistake looked like. The tension that created was unbearable.

We closed ourselves up in what worked. Then we tried to forget.

But you remember what you try to forget.

The old man is silent.

The future is the present is the past repeated. The same arrives again and again. Each time it appears as something new. From the sense of something new we derive hope for redemption. But it never comes.

The child moves a fire engine back and forth across the floor.

21.

It is the signal that gives way to noise. It is a mass of white. It is clouds of black flecks. It is the way their movements buzz. It is the insects in a wall of grass. It is full of holes. It is the line animals that stream through them. It is the ways they shake. It is the curved air that comes. It is the miniature tree of life on a table. The secret is there is no secret. It is a mass of white. It is the holes that fill it. It is the girl made of sticks. It is her arms that open like fans. It is the expanse that pours through her eyes.

