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## The Maiden Aunt

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# The Maiden Aunt

### Ruth Mangan Stump

She sat erect,

Aristocratic neck taut

Pointed chin lifted just a bit.

She sugared her tea, carefully chose a date bar

From her niece's silver tray.

The niece sat poised.

The cloak of motherhood had earned her

A certain advantage.

The old woman coughed—a bit of powdered sugar

Tickled her throat.

An unfamiliar rush of hot steamy mist filled her

Head and forced the question.

"What was it like, giving birth?"

"It was like an intruder banging his head against my door

For an agonizingly long time.

At last, the door gave way and the stranger entered my arms.

Welcomed."

The aunt nodded thoughtfully.

Sipped her tea,

Satisfied.