Night

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Available at: http://dc.cod.edu/plr/vol36/iss2/15

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It’s late, and in the air there is the electric scent of coming rain. I walk slowly towards the gate with the woman to whose children I read the story of Snow White, a foolish girl who tasted death three times. The children’s other two choices had been renditions of Rapunzel, and the familiar story in my fading voice had coaxed them to sleep like the prick of a finger on a spinning-wheel, lowering them gently, quietly into the shallows. And after the last story’s final words, that tender happily ever after, I’d shepherded them to bed; they had stumbled, tousle-haired and hazy-eyed, through hallways harder than their soft sleep, small mouths stretched into delicate yawns. I had spent the following almost-silence in stationary escape, pulling myself through the yielding pages of a novel heftier than my thoughts, the whispering pages harmonizing with the patriarchal cabinet towering in the corner, which counted out my minutes like beans: payment for a good cow I could not keep, but would not miss once I had seeds of magic pressed into my palm. And so when the woman comes home and we walk outside, into the stirring air that holds the electric scent of coming rain, I think of those beans. I go slowly towards the gate, and I let my heart race deliciously when the restless wind pushes against my clothes and tugs at my hair, and I feel the savage capability in the low darkness of the sky to rend itself wide with flaming light and survive the torrents it will birth and we will bear.