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Untitled

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Melissa Brummer

loved him like a sack of oats, to smash the headlights so they would never slide across the front of her tired house again.

My mother comes home late too.

I tell Mimi this, but no one else.

I tell her some nights, my mother's shoe is broken, or her breath smells like burning leaves. I tell Mimi that she touches me on my arm with dry fingers that have touched the shoulders of men who wet their mouths with beer and man laughter, and that she tells me to go to bed, and then laughs like she knows something I don't.

Mimi tells me all of the things that she knows and I don't, like how to get rid of a toothache, *drink hot water and rub silver over your cheek*, or how to cure sunburns, *peel an orange and throw the peelings over your left shoulder*. I open my mouth and laugh a soft laugh, soft like flower petals, and Mimi smiles.

A silence interrupts us. It's heavy, like summer flies that land on my hand, like the dust and stones from Mimi's driveway, and after the silence ends, Mimi sends me home, *it's getting late*, and she turns around, spins, like a gypsy, and goes into her tired house.

I stumble down the stairs of her porch, like the Dutch part of Mimi's last name, *Oh-zer*, the right side of me getting away with the left side of me. I feel the grass under my bare feet and see clouds in the sky, clouds that want to give me another name, that know that Tommy is not enough.