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WHY I HAVE NO EYEBROWS AND A FUNNY-LOOKING BABY
ROSE SWARTZ

I was an ambitious and untrained scientist.
I was trying to erase you but knew nothing of alchemy.
The internet instructions were written loosely in German.

After the fire I tried to hide with the avocado man:
we donated your remains to an experimental rock band.
I then made several dates with a vacuum salesman.

I planted your leftover organs and letters in my bed.
Placed a classified ad “seeking gardening companion…”
But the newspaper clippings kept coming up the same:

Wallaby (baby kangaroo) bottle-fed, $1500.00.
I called the zoo to buy myself an unanniversary present.
I want a baby I moaned I’m a millionaire.

I brought a picture of you in boy-scout uniform down
to Lincoln Park. It danced the sidewalk Charleston and
repeated the phrase “Homey don’t play that—“

’till they handed over my marsupial. I named him Rupert.
When I returned the picture to your grandmother’s kitchen,
the rotary dials were crawling the walls like spiders.

I kept asking Ben Franklin how to un-make gold:
gas stove, butane, shove the postcards in the toaster.
Rupert can hop by himself now. We go to the grocery store

(detergent, burn cream, mashed banana, eucalyptus sleeping pills,
Diet Mocha-Mocha Shakes). The raisin skin women rake the cool air
with their eyelashes. Each one manages to burp

up a precious for my zoo baby. When I told the clerk I was looking
for a few more chemistry sets and a claw foot tub to get sick in,
she handed me your forwarding address and an eyebrow pencil.