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Fire

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FIRE

The smell came through the hotel windows at night: sea salt, wind, and the thick dark shadow of ash. It hovered like an unseeable cat in the room, trying to settle. More than a month before, the flames burned out. But the singe, the stink of all the living trees and brush charred, didn't give up.

The woods I had seen with my own eyes. Trunks buckled in half. Brush burnt to a strange screaming orange. A boulder, large as a cow, exploded into four perfect pieces that could be put back together if life worked that way. Instead, apart, the breaking force of heat inspired fear.

Every few feet, snaking lunar shoots, white and searching the air, stuck up from bulbs burned back to their hard brown crusts. The thick landscape of ash smoked over all the hill. Webby black heated ooze smeared my shoes and legs.

I almost knew that white growth sounded too simple. So it was vague relief hearing you say the shoots were poison. The fire raged so enormous and complete; it was too soon for anything good. Hope would have changed the destruction into something small. You stopped me from filling in the emptiness smoldering.