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Chimney Sleep

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CHIMNEY SLEEP

Unable to get to sleep one hot summer night, I climb out of my window and onto the roof. Plumping my pillow against the base of the chimney, I notice something I've never seen before: a row of tiny houses, the ones I'd built for my miniature railroad trains years ago. Someone mortared them into place at the base of the chimney. I peek in the window of a tiny plastic brick house. A map with pastel ice floes on the wall over the bed, and, Oh, the bed sheets—Dreamsicle cool. I run into the house, up the stairs, and dive for the bed, tingling with sleep before I land.

*

I'm delivering mail, decades old, stashed in the trunk of my English teacher's old Volvo. He claimed he had no idea how all that mail got there. I can still remember the day he took our class to the post office and told us, *Every letter written is a letter written to God.* Maybe, if he's lucky, they'll let him teach English in prison. When I deliver the undelivered mail, men salute me, women embrace me, dogs urinate all over themselves.

*

Clatter of aluminum ladder leading up to the chimney. My father's voice, swearing at me for leaving his ladder out. Through the blinds I see the trunk of his enormous thumb, large and powerful in the moonlight. Much too large to ever enter my little brick house. How can I tell him? God is a postal worker dozing off in his postal uniform upon a mound of mail, letters lightly falling from the sky.