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Jane Lunin Perel

BLOOD SOMEWHERE

Camelia does not know what to think of the world-renowned Doctor on whose office walls glide eight striped, wooden fish with aluminum eyes and cork pupils. Fish with chrome tails. They swim like zombies whistling voodoo tunes. They are next to the eight black and white prints of rotting cauliflower, across from the mandala of hemp and dried blood. "Did you have the blood somewhere else?" the receptionist asks over the phone. Did someone lose her blood, Camelia wonders, or store it in an unsafe place, a refrigerator in a slum that Dobermans snarl at? The door to the office is solid mahogany, framed in black. The handle is chrome that shines like a scalpel. It's supposed to calm you, these off-white walls, this recessed lighting, this black leather seating, but Camelia thinks that if she stands up and walks to the door, opening it, a zebra will romp in with a red mouth and a gash under its left eye. It will race at her until she rushes into the Doctor's private office where she will find him x-raying fish. His hands will be raw from washing.