

Small Potatoes

by Lydia Copeland

I kiss his sunburned nose, so nice under the beach house. We hear the shower of palm leaves like wings getting ready. We talk about a time we'll no longer know each other, when he'll be sad in a bar in another state, slipping and sliding and petting lost dogs in the parking lot, and I'll be with another man, the one that comes after him, the one he says I'll marry just because. There are cob webs under our fingers and sand mixed with dust and broken shells. The wind is rushing in to lift our hair, our clothes. I want and want, under the house in the summer, a comb for our tangled hair, a shared suitcase with his jeans folded into mine.

Months later he will tell me I need to learn to be a woman. When he tells me this, it will be night and there will be my flower garden in front of us, everything closed up for the evening. We will sit under the porch roof of my rented apartment, side by side in folding chairs. Without touching, without looking. He'll go on to say the new man is a joke that everyone will laugh about. I'll say, I'll be the judge of that. By then I will be sick of his small potatoes, sick of our nowhere town. He'll go on and on, quoting from my journal, but I'll be somewhere else entirely, kicking miniature roses in the dark, thinking of my strawberry plants.

