

Saturday Morning

by Mary Lane

The neighbor who lives across the street is out of town. I know because she asked us to feed the cat tomorrow morning, but her son came home from college last night. He comes out the front door shirtless to walk his overnight guest to her car. My daughter and I draw with chalk in our driveway and I watch them.

His visitor has long brown legs and dark hair pulled up off her neck the way girls do when they wake up first thing in the morning. She smiles as her fingers loop into the elastic edge of his pajama pants. She pulls him to her. They kiss, opening their mouths into a smile, sharing a secret. Their kiss is so intimate. I blush, and look away embarrassed.

I focus on drawing new roads and farm buildings for my daughter's toy animals with the chalk. She runs her matchbox car down the main street and pulls into the hospital, making ambulance noises.

The visitor drives away and I remember doing things like that — kissing long and hard before saying goodbye.

The neighbor opens his front door to go back inside and his dog Lola runs out across the street. She knows my daughter. She stands up to pet the dog. Lola rolls over on her back and her tongue lolls out of her mouth. She smiles up at my daughter, who laughs.

The neighbor ambles over. I'm only three or four years older than he is, but he seems so much younger. His hair is long and tousled. He smiles around the lines on his face. He looks like a mess you wouldn't mind finding first thing in the morning.

"Sorry about Lola," he says. He's wearing more clothes than men would at the beach, but I'm uncomfortable with his half-nakedness.

"It's fine," I say to the dog instead of him. "She's a sweet pup. Makes me wish we had a dog."

My husband is inside playing video games with the boys. He used to kiss me like that, pressed against my car first thing in the morning. He doesn't want a dog.

The neighbor leaves and the early morning sun crests over the house, shining on my daughter's face. Her skin burns so easily and she squints from the light.

"Let's go inside," I say.

We dust the chalk off our hands and go in. It still smells like bacon and pancakes. The boys are on the couch and the breakfast plates are next to the sink. Gunfire from the third person shooter game fills my ears as I load the dishwasher.

"Are there any dishes in the living room?" I call.

"Just my plate," he answers.

I dry my hands off to go get it, but hear his steps behind me, his fork sliding around on his plate. Turning to take it from him, he beats me to it, putting it in the dishwasher for me. I smile and appreciate it.

"Thank you."

"No. Thank *you*," he says back.

We smile at each other for a moment and then I turn back to my work. I feel his hand on my arm and he kisses me under my earlobe, his scruff tickling my skin. I never mind his scruff. My face turns to linger near his. He picks up on the hint and kisses me again, strong and sweet.

He pulls away and I watch his backside as he returns to the video game.

Those have become my favorite kind of kisses, standing at the kitchen sink. Unexpected, strong and sweet. I smile and think of a way to make a stronger case for a dog.

