

Finder Girl

by Tawnysha Greene

When I meet my sister at the beach, we lay out a big sheet, open bags of bread, feed seagulls with outstretched hands. Her three girls chase the birds and my sister points out the white walls beyond the parking lot, asks if I remember the maze we visited as kids.

Its doors are barred shut now, but the four towers in the middle are still there—checkpoints with pencils tied to each with a white string. I am eight then, she is six. Sheets of paper in hand, four towers to be marked off on the page, we race through.

She's at the third tower before I reach the first and the sun gets hot, the dead ends more frequent. I lean down to the ground, find her feet across the maze, white sandals running, turning, running again. She calls to me from the final tower, tells me how to get there.

I find a door, but it's where we started and my sister's already out, her sheet checked off. The one in my hands is blank, unmarked. Momma calls her the finder girl, a name I think of now, but don't say as my sister fiddles with her keys, watches her girls play.

Daddy's keys, I remember, he always misplaced them before going to work at night. He wakes us, drags us down the stairs, says we have a minute to find what he's lost. We look under couch cushions, through clothes in the laundry, behind curtains, under rugs.

Weekends, he loses the television remote, his wallet, the keys again. Sometimes, we find them, sometimes, we don't and when time runs out, Daddy gets the tool out from the garage—the one with the jagged edge for cleaning the grill—holds us down.

More times than not, Daddy has me pinned to the floor, hands behind my back, when my sister comes running, Daddy's keys in her hand, yelling, *I found it, Daddy*, and Momma puts us back to bed, kisses her, calls her the finder girl again.

Beckoning her girls back, my sister packs up our things on the beach, puts her keys in her pocket. She flings the sheet free of sand and I take the other side, hold the sheet out, and we fold it end over end, meeting in the middle where she takes it, and I let go.

