

Homework

After half a lifetime together, he left. Called me on his work cell from another state. I had strep throat, was making dinner and helping RJ with his math homework. At first I just hung up and removed his piece of fish from the cold broiler pan, rewrapped it and placed it in the fridge. It seemed hot in the fridge, hot and moldy, and some French cheese had white mold on it. I shut the door.

I turned back around and RJ was gone, but his homework remained unfinished. Instead of calling him to nag, I put our fish under the broiler and turned on the water under the vegetables. I poured a vodka. I sat.

When the space alien in his moon suit walked in, he asked to manger la montre. Eat the clock. Yes, let's eat the clock. Sounds delicious. He sat down on the floor next to me and the dog came over too to rest her chin on my thigh. Together the three of us ate the clock. Too much time, he had said. *You're taking too much time.*

We finished eating the clock. The alien said, what does that beep mean on your planet? I said it is time to eat fish and vegetables. Push aside your homework and remove your moon suit. Milk or water? Water please. RJ sat down at the table. Butter on my veges please. Lots.

I did not eat. My throat hurt bad. RJ, how's your throat? Good. Bathtime, teeth, books, lullaby. It took a week. What about money? I'd need a job that paid money. I was once a woman with skills.

Then he arrived home. After 72 hours. Said he'd never left, just to Seattle for a meeting. How was your week, he asked. I don't know. There was a problem with time and health, I think. And some homework was left incomplete.