

poetry by Kai Hoffman-Krull

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Coals

We watch the fire die, embers emptying
themselves of light and warmth.

My hand rests on your thigh as it
always does,
though tonight it does not seem to
offer comfort.

The haze burrows, staining the walls and
windows,
the shirt you bought for me while I was
gone.

Steam whistles through the kettle's
nose
as it has done for some time, thirst
now forgotten.

Outside the trees are losing their
garments, the leaves
changing theirs, wearing the colors of
dusk, the burnt

yellow you love so much. Silence.
The music once
played now over.

We have been looking at the logs beside
us for hours,
the ones we cut so diligently.

Ashes grow like rain clouds, smoke
like mist,
a silent storm mounting of
saturated darkness.

We sit, waiting for the other to stoke
these coals
shivering with glow, growing cold.

Cut

Cutting the bell
pepper in strips,
oil blistering
in the pan,
the knife turns,
discovers a softer
place
in the valley
between my thumb
and forefinger.
Finding it warm,
it digs deeper
until,
with a dull echo,
it hits
bedrock.

Bird of flesh,
wings opening
and opening,
beak drawing
from the river
of its birth.
Already I can
see the iron
in these bleeding
waters
begin to rust.