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MR. D TAKES HIS MOTHER TO CHURCH
Candace Black

He'd always been the dutiful
son: college at St. Leo's, house built
behind his mother's, separated
only by a tiled patio. And now he takes
Mamie to church. High Mass at eleven.
Ceiling fans swirl
the muggy air slowly. Parishioners wave
their leaflet missals. And still
sweat rolls down the spine, between powdered
breasts, down from the armpit
until at last wet
skin feels good, licked
by weak breezes. Mr. D thinks of this
as he goes through the motions
of worship, Mamie's rosary and lips moving
quickly in an effort to finish
before Communion. Blessed, they greet
Father Menville at the door. Only the secrecy
of the confessional prevents
any mention of the obviously
absent: Mr. D's wife, damned
for control of her body, forbidden from this
gathering of saints.