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Sidebar

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McCabe: Sidebar

SIDEBAR

Melanie McCabe

None of us ever dreamed she could do something like that. After all, a bell is just a hoopskirt of bronze until you peep beneath and find the clapper—or until you make it ring.

She dyed her hair the color of oxygen, painted round her eyes with something drab as twigs. Did she have a mouth, a tongue? We never noticed, but now, knowing

what we know, we're supposing that she did. Just so, a trapdoor spider. Just so, one of those nightmare plants that does unspeakable things inside covert lips.

There were never any words. She had a kind of hum, like white noise. We never heard beneath it that other song, its pitch so shrill even the dogs let it alone.

She smelled like nothing we knew—a scent that neither pricked the nose nor arched the spine. It was dry as hourglass sand, the null of kindling before it pops with flame.

How then this spoor tracked to so much mayhem? We've thumped theories like melons since we heard, but haven't uncovered a clue. Still, we're happy to tell you everything

we can imagine and then some. How she leaned against walls and looked exactly like them. How her name spilled thick ink but wrote nothing in the air. Come back

tomorrow, and we'll tell you more: how under the rocks in her yard, there were things that crawled. How what squirmed needed only a lifted stone, a witness to make it true.