

Overhead, the clouds cracked and scudded into a dark shadow against the tree line. Wind swept up through the cropped curls of my hair, and my mother clenched her teeth, clacking her hammer against the nails, piercing the tarp into the soft wood of the shed.

Looking up at my father, the world seemed to curve around him in a blue-gray halo. In the distance, I could hear a soft shushing sound, like the rustle of insect wings or the hushed whispers of children.

“Do you hear that?” I said. And, looking down the wall of the shed, I could see it, too. The blur coming to engulf us.

When the rain finally came pouring down, thick and sharp, it was as if for the first time, we all knew this thing with the shed was hopeless. The tarp was folding over itself, flapping in the wind. My father was wincing, holding his incision that never healed right. And as my mother’s hair matted down in wet blonde strands, I could see the anger rising up within her—the same panic-stricken look she had a year ago when she said, *There is no they*. Only this time, instead of crying or slamming doors, she sent the hammer flying across the yard, its glint of metal soaring, before she, too, faded into the cold gusts.

When she was gone, I helped my father down from the roof. Held the ladder steady and watched as he disappeared inside. Then, from the grass, I grabbed my mother’s hammer, pulled mud from its claw like hair from a scalp, then whacked and whacked towards something, I knew, would never take hold.