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Bonnie, the Foreman Says What She's Been Thinking

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Bonnie, the Foreman, Says What She's Been Thinking

Gina Clark

This Mack I know is the saddest man in the world.
Me and Mack work all day outdoors in denim
jumpsuits and steel-toed boots the color
of putty. Mack is blonde and whiskerless.
Two of his molars are capped. His wife Jill
is not good to him. In the morning when Mack
gets up, Jill will not fry an egg or fill him a cup
of black coffee. She lies in bed, spooned around the spot
where Mack has been, soft, curved like a C-clamp.
She does not snore—Mack told me that.
Her breath is sweet, her lips red
as if she had been eating berries.
Mack kisses her and makes his own egg,
sacks his own lunch and leaves in the dark.
I see him first thing. I say “Hello, Mack”
and see how sad he is with a wife like that.
If I was Mack’s wife I would be up at six
laying out white bread and cutting canned ham,
putting five-bean soup in a thermos mug.
At night, I’d put epsom salts and warm water
in washbins for his feet. I would bake two
chickens in their skins and let Mack eat
with his fingers, lick the gravy off his thumbs.
At night, Jill does nails in her basement
and perms old ladies’ hair while sad Mack
eats Swanson’s on a T.V. tray. Wednesdays
Jill does my nails. Her emery boards
are bigger than metal files. Her cuticles
are clean, smooth as a bead of caulk. She oils
my knuckles until I am sleepy, until Mack
calls her up to bed. It’s not even late and Jill
has painted only one coat of Persian Pink
on my fingers and Mack already wants her.
She blows on my nails and her breath is like berries.
Mack is waiting on the stairs. He is still hungry.
He is still the saddest man in the world.