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Addressing My Very Mind

Sabrina Mendoza

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bottom, she rolls up one sleeve, submerges her arm into the liquid. Down it goes, disappearing beneath the surface—stops short of her armpit. Round and round the arm turns until all sugar dissolves. I gaze her way in silence. The last cookie in place, I find a dipping spoon to fill cups with sweetened Kool-Aid. We talk—small talk mostly.

“That enough cookies, you think, Mrs. Jackson?” I look in the direction of the cookie table. She glances, continues to wipe spills off the countertop.

“’Pect so,” she answers. “Mind you, they got to last till week’s end.” Her response gives me confidence. She’s an adult. I’m a girl.

“Hope they’re on time tonight,” remembering a late dismissal the night before.

“Young ‘uns can’t sit forever. Got to be done fairly.” She goes on humming and drying dishes with a flour-sack cloth.

“Good.” I go on dipping sweetened Kool-Aid, pondering her arm stirring that sugar.

Overly germ conscious, my mama says. Won’t drink after others—even my own family. Won’t eat eggs either, makes me sick thinking about their trip through a hen. Mama’s probably right.

“Young ‘uns turn into wild Indians if they sit too long.” She chuckles at the thought. I laugh too. She likes me and I like her. How do I know? I know.

By and by we hear the sound of feet scurrying through the wood-plank hall. With doors and windows wide open, sounds carry with absolute clarity. Squeals of laughter, like bouncing balls, precede the children’s entrance. Time to move to my post, the cookie table.

“Take two...two please...leave some for others.”

A cup of Kool-Aid rests in my hand, placed there by Mother-of-Three. When all is said and done, does it really matter how sugar gets dissolved in Kool-Aid?



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Serendipity

Beth Turner Ayers

I suppose I was seeking validation
That I was acceptable, if not desired
At least tolerable.

High school boys had offered
Little confirmation – So I said “yes”
I will go out with your cousin’s friend
Sight unseen, few details given,
A fraternity brother who needed a date.
What did that say? I wondered.

Not the fraternity with high academic standards
Or thankfully, the one of drunken philanderers.
His was non-descript – the one that few knew.
It was arranged.

I waited, peering through window blinds

Into January’s cool darkness,
Watching shiny red tail lights disappear
As the clock ticked in my head and I
Left my post to glance at the one on the stove
To validate my suspicion of tardiness,
To affirm my fear that even sight unseen
He had passed me by.
Then the yellow car with the black racing stripe
Circled again and stopped.
My pounding, curious heart led me to the foyer
With the hope of confirmation to arrive.
But there was more – I opened the door
To the love of my life.
Daily validation.



You Stand in the Window Sabrina Mendoza