

## **Over Exposure**

by Rachel Escott, 2007

The early bubbling industry of the birds in the plum tree did not wake him, because he had not slept. He had not felt this bladder-irritating acidity since before his parents divorced – those hours of darkness and drum-roll voices announcing sudden door slams or clearly enunciated but unintelligible snatches of blame.

The sun fingered the pink curtains and immediately the bedroom burned. Steven kicked the sticky duvet and stood. His wife snuffled abruptly and turned away. He avoided the sight of her forehead, but remained between the bed and the window; his chest tilting towards the door and the garage, his feet undecided. His stomach yearned for the security of the bathroom and yet his head, as for months now, chattered aimlessly.

Later in the morning bailiffs would arrive with forms from the bank. His wife would be speechless and then cry. She would look at him with contempt. His daughters, too, would cry, though without understanding and simply as an instinctive ratcheting of his guilt. He thought of the plum tree and the swings underneath, and wondered where they would all sleep tonight.

The End

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