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## stealing

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# stealing

LAURIE GUILMARTIN

First it was going to be wine, but then we decided we weren't wine people, so we said beer—we could get any kind and I told him that my parents drank Corona by the pool, so we could get that, but he said to me, "our first drink will not be a cold one," and so he changed his mind back to wine and justified it by telling me that we were wine people as long as we drank it out of the bottle and I imagined it and saw us running from the store—the bottle tucked in his pants—and it just seemed better than bolting with a six-pack under my arm—so I told him he was right and we walked up the two cement stairs and stood in front of the little 7-11 on Cramer and I was scared so I told him I was and he squeezed my hand and told me that we would be fine and even if we were caught, well, it would be a good story for our kids and I smiled trying to imagine a fireplace, or sewing, or reading a bedtime story and I imagined wishing or remembering the days when he and I were young and wild and I said yes, we need to do this and thinking of it my skin began to itch and jitter and my hand melted so that the streams of my sweat ran together with his and he told me to be cool or else they'd notice something was up and I told him I'd try my best, but I wasn't sure if I could be cool, so I asked him if it would be better if he went alone and he told me that I was Bonnie and he was Clyde and one never really could have ever been famous without the other and I smiled and said, "Okay, now then," and we walked in and I nodded to the cashier and mouthed to him, "Afternoon," and he looked back down at his newspaper—he was old, maybe seventy—sometimes when I see a man that old, like him, who looks like they're missing something, my eyes well up because I pity them—but I turned quickly away because I didn't want to back down, but I was starting to wonder why we were doing this, why we had to do this, and I know he said, "well we're too young to buy alcohol, so let's just take it," but when he looked up and winked at me and took off his belt and slipped the bottle under his sweatshirt and into the back of his pants I turned to look at the cashier who looked up at me and then over at his pants and the cashier bit his cracked lip and looked back down and smiled and I knew I was already drunk and I grabbed his hand and we jumped up and ran and ran and ran and ran and I knew why.

