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Black Hole // Brittany Clemens

My mother and I keep a black hole in our kitchen. I don't remember it always being there, so maybe one day, she took it in as a stray and it made a nest in our littlest drawer. I think it likes us, or maybe it just stays because it knows it will always get fed. We'll offer it pencils, tempt it with car keys, and dangle dollar bills over its gaping void. When the drawer is shut, we can still hear it, gobbling up earrings and lipstick, notepaper and nail clippers, the last remnants of matter disappearing with a metallic clang and a flash of light. When my mother gets angry, she over-feeds it, throwing empty Purell bottles and torn-up ticket stubs down its throat with extra helpings of dirty pennies and broken calculators. When I get angry, I starve it, and hoard its midnight snacks for myself. In those moments of both feast and famine, I wonder why it never complains about our yelling in the night or the constant opening and slamming of its drawer. But then at the height of our blowup, she and I will pause just long enough to hear a little hiccup, or the smallest of coughs, and our black hole will draw up from its endless stomach a handmade card, a painted-on pinch pot, a lost Christmas present, a family photo...