

Yellow onions were her husband's favorite part of the salsa, so Rosie added one extra because it was his birthday. She sliced each yellow onion slowly, blinking away the tears as her liver-marked hand guided the blade. The tortillas were pressed, the enchiladas baked, all that was left was the salsa.

He loved her salsa, said once that he'd like to take a bath in it. Though he was turning 50, he still exuded youth—though her perception of him may have been colored by her being 17 years his senior. It didn't bother her, being older. She told her girlfriends, ladies from the rotary who came over to play bridge every Thursday, that being married to John kept her young. The truth was, she'd always felt like a mother to him, even when they were making love. He would caress her sagging flesh, proving with his hands that her desirability had not yet faded—hands that had not yet grown knobby and skeletal like hers.

She glanced to her paper-thin skin of her hand and her stomach dropped. She hardly recognized it, slick and veined like a piece of polished marble. Moments like this were a regularity for Rosie: she would notice some neglected part of her body, mortified at how aged it had become. For much of their marriage, time seemed to not exist, and they flowed carelessly like a river over a bed of rocks. Then one day she was an old woman. John looked the same as he did when he was thirty, minus the peppering of gray hair. He was a model of immortality, while her body was ossifying from the inside out. Soon she would be a fossil.

It was getting dark. He was usually home from work by now. The car was in the shop and he was hoping to get a ride home from one of his office buddies. But maybe he couldn't find a ride. Rosie considered calling the office, but would hold off until the salsa was prepared.

The sting of onions in Rosie's eyes became unbearable. She moved the cutting board to the counter by the window where the onion fumes weren't so concentrated. Continuing to chop, she glanced out to the street, waiting for one of his office buddies to drop him off.

She sliced the onions sideways now, moving the knife only slightly, chopping them as finely as her stiff hands would allow.

Break lights lit and a car was in their driveway. John had found a ride home, thank goodness. But the salsa still wasn't done, the table wasn't set, his cocktail wasn't prepared.

Rosie chopped faster, feeding strands of onion to the maw between board and knife.

John remained in the car for a moment. Then a door must have been opened because the dome light in the car illuminated everything. The person driving was a woman with red hair. He'd never mentioned a woman with red hair who worked with him. Perhaps she was new. A smile lingered on her bright pink lips, then she leaned slowly into John and kissed him. He leapt back, and Rosie could read his lips when he said, "Not now!" He straightened his tie and collected his briefcase. She blew him a kiss as the car rolled out of the driveway.

Rosie looked down. The onions looked like chopped tomatoes. She had sliced through the tip of her thumb and blood issued freely over the cutting board.

The front door handle jiggled. Then a knock came.

"Honey?" John shouted. "Honey the door's locked. Can you come and open it?"

Rosie froze, her hand suspended over the onions, blood trickling over them like hot sauce. Her mind had simply ceased to operate, like a rusty bicycle wheel grinding to a halt. Only one thought occurred to her, and it was this that she dwelled on: there were no more onions.

“Darling?” More knocks on the door. “Are you there?”

No more onions.

They would have to make do with what they had.