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## CICADAS

BY ALYSON MILLER

A room thick with the sound of clicking, like cicadas or teeth chattering over metal spoons. In a corner, a man with hair tufted as though yanked by invisible hands speaks in sentences that collapse in front of him like incense and old buildings. A caged bird flaps like the wild thing it might have been, and a freckled cat sleeps under a table, its long body threaded around feet and fallen arguments. Something that could be music struggles in the spaces between shoulders and monologues, while a chalk-white girl offers faded pamphlets from an orange box. In a crack-tiled kitchen filling with smoke, a couple screams slant rhymes and haiku at each other as a moon-faced boy sobs at the quiet beauty of a muted TV. Outside, a pole-thin man with a cartoon chin walks along peeling fence palings, shouting fragments to night skies about poetry and good omens, bedroom silhouettes and the sadness of lost shoes.