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September 2019

Madeleines

By Cassandra Atherton

In between baking batches of cookies I cremate our friendship. It doesn't take long, the years combust in 15 minutes on 350 degrees in my Smeg oven. I don't have an urn, so when they cool, I place the ashes in a snap lock bag. Tiny souvenirs of our time together somehow survive the heat: fragments of keychains from places we travelled; the top of a tin that contained caramels; part of the Golden Gate Bridge from the top of a pen. I change the baking paper and bake some madeleines, their golden shell-shapes remind me of sand dunes and honey. When the oven timer chimes I crush the madeleines, add their crumbs to the bag and drop them from my sixth floor balcony. As the bag hits the ground, ashen cake crumbs memorialise our time together. I think it's over but neighbours track remnants around the outside of the building and four days later, on the way to get coffee, a tiny sliver of red, plastic heart sticks in my shoe.

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