

Hiding

It was no ordinary moon, but a super moon glowing above and between houses. They were running in its cool white light. The mother was running from her daughter. Was she sixteen or seventeen? First she was the one chasing, then she was the chased. One of them went to stare at the moon. Not together. Not tonight. One chin lifted, one set of shoulders hunched. One bathrobe coming loose.

It was not a warm night in the conventional sense, but warm for early December. Both the mother and her daughter were out of shape. The daughter had some height on her and could see above tall bushes and fences. For a time, she trained as a ballerina and still had moments of grace, lifting her long neck, arms moving in unison as she pressed back the branches behind the garage.

The mother stood behind the tree in the backyard like a large garden statue. Occasionally she leaned out to watch for her daughter, hands shielding her eyes from the glare. The tree towered over the deck near the crab-shaped red sandbox where the daughter used to play. It stayed uncovered, no matter the weather. The daughter never played with dolls in the house, but there were those she left in the sandbox seasons on end. Long blond hair, yellowy and plastic, covered in sand and earwigs. Later she'd rounded a bend later. Started liking pink.

She could hear her daughter humming from a distance. It was a popular song about a former stripper who became rich. The verse she remembered was about buying her mom a new car. Maybe motherhood lives in the gesture reciprocated, good or bad, she thought. Maybe my day will come.

Earlier in the week, the mother had read about the sound the earth makes deep at its core. Scientists described it as a bell, constantly ringing. She felt sure that it shivered up her spine as she stepped away from the tree, finally moved out of hiding.