

PATRICIA ALFORD

Window, Mirror, Drawer

Window. When silence looks in the mirror, as when a boy throws a stone into a pond, the mirror ripples. Silence doesn't agree with this effect. Silence would rather comb her hair and brush her teeth like everyone else. Silence would rather put on makeup. She'd like to apply lipstick, she'd like to put on the heavy silver jewelry she bought in the desert, tie the hand painted silk scarves in her hair, but when silence looks in the mirror other faces look back. one is the face of a loon playing a flute all night long. Face number two has braids tied with ribbons. Face number three is a no show. Number four washes her face, practises her smile, she leans forward to apply m a s c a r a. Silence can wait. She has already waited. Has a nest behind the bathroom door among the damp towels and underwear. Silence has all the time in the world. In a drawer lined with scented paper, Drawer. silence keeps a hand mirror.

This is my mother's mirror, silence thinks. It was her mother's mirror. The handle and frame yellowed ivory. Once there was a brush to match and possibly a comb. It's a wonder the mirror has survived, for mirrors, as you well know, are prone to break. Silence thinks, we've had seven years bad luck anyway. More.