

Plaster Heart

There's a strange warmth to the shimmering gaze of the moon. It slips by, almost unnoticed, through the windows of her house. The house screams silently, as all things do when their wounded foundations are revealed by waxing glimmer. A chorus of reverent despair that she tries not to hear. Then came the voice she knew as Husband.

“Do you still love me?”

Her iced saucers stare back like moons. “Well,” she pauses. “I – Yes.” The trowel bumps apologetically against hardening plasterwork, diverting her attention outwards. They'd been redoing the walls of their bedroom for several days now. The labor is draining, yet she labors anyways.

“But do you **love** me?”

The coating meant to protect the walls vexes her endlessly. Ten minutes only and the infertile gypsum begins to calcify. She yearns for the slow-setting strength of lime, but nonetheless works her trowel against the four walls. “Of course I do,” she says.

“It's a simple question, really.”

Her gaze-lit walls had begun to crack at the edges. She wasn't ready for them to crumble; if not for the decency of presentation, then for fear of wonder at the beams and wiring just beyond. The truth beneath her finely crafted foundations. Truth is fatal, relentless in what it takes. *And what it gives*, she realizes. *Could she dare consider? No. No!* Her thoughts splinter into a hundred noisy fractals before the cracks can widen.

She and he finish their troweling, sparing her ambivalent walls from the moon's liberating luminescence. The house still screams if she tries to listen. Just quieter, more muffled. But she doesn't try. More than anything, she craves a new coat of paint. Some color for the walls maintained around truths she pretends not to know.