Alien Invasions at the Evans Salvage Grocery

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Alien Invasions at the Evans Salvage Grocery

Abstract
You look past dents in the cans. Bruised fruit-flesh—that's fine. But boxes, you have to inspect the seams...

Cover Page Footnote
"Alien Invasions at the Evans Salvage Grocery" was originally published at Booth.
You look past dents in the cans.
   Bruised fruit-flesh—that’s fine.
   But boxes, you have to inspect the seams.

At 15, I pretend sci-fi—

    [the food comes to us from far away.
    has had a rough journey from earth to this
    boiling rock. we’ve been marooned. maybe
    we were criminals, who knows, who cares anymore.
    survive. don’t get eaten.
    sometimes we are invaded]

At 15, I bring home grain beetles

for the second time. Secret breach. They sing in the cupboard
   in the box in the rice. After three days I wake
   to my sister’s reproach—
      check the seams.
      This all has to go.

   [they’re everywhere cry the abandoned colonists]
She fights for a week against their gleaming incursion. Seed-bodies, tiny mouths, wanton & hungry in the cabinets. Then gassed.
    Popped like seeds, small implosion of air.

    [i am still scraping along on that planet rationing the good oxygen failing to check the frontiers for risk]

Last night you were fighting with bottles again— I drove you by the house my mother was made to give back, where I pretend

the invaders I unknowingly smuggled as a child are germinating in the dark kitchen.
    [they have been waiting for years growing in size and hunger]
    We know a thing or two about family

setting fire to the carpet beneath our homely feet. The new owners keep the grass short, don’t collect trash like curios. But they saved the swing

my grandfather hung, & its tree was still strong. Swinging with you under the bottle-colored moon, we listened together [different invasions

familiar alien glittering seed-song— high & old & hungry]