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Home Movies

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Home Movies

It would be awful to believe
in miracles, I mean, the kind like flying fish.
Or marigolds blossoming into a mural
on the cotton shirt between your arms
from an avalanche of lightning sweat after such an ugly day.
I see the glitter of putrescence, the water
gleaming from millions of tiny dead bodies.
Fish don't have wings.
They're jumping in terror
because bigger fish want to eat them.
You said, *you can't really believe that*,
when we met at the milk bar,
the murmur of unicorn honey still fresh in our ears
and packed in, shoulders touching elbows
touching sundress straps.
And I said, for a Reagan baby,
the only home movie we ever had all together
was us dressed in Starfleet uniforms,
stiffly acting out a scene
on the Enterprise bridge for a VHS theme park keepsake.
My seven-year-old chubby face was sunburnt
and my ears were Vulcan
and in warp speed,
my mother ran away and my father's heart attack was unsuccessful
in guilting her back.
Her gypsy tears became a comforting embrace
in the way black magic – the living dead,
Barbados kind of corpuscular mythos –
explains that everything good dies here, even the stars –
an exhilarating decay. That's when the sorrow
leaked from your swollen skull in thunder claps
like applauding terrible things
if our cheers were stinging tart like hardened icing on a cake.
And if miracles were terrible things like day-old sweets
or a moon lit by a dying sun, I would be sad but a believer.

And the cosmos would just be a place
where our parents go too early and not something
fascinating and wonderful.

About Matthew Salyers

Matthew Salyers is a native of western Pennsylvania, not to be confused with eastern Pennsylvania. Hobbies include nail-biting, vacuuming, and reading about how people died. His short fiction has appeared in *Oblong Magazine* as well as numerous outlets on the Internets. He does not know who invented the Internet or how long it took or why we are not living on the Moon yet.