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mint

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by Emily Ables

the air from the window felt like mint on my skin: cold-burning, hair-raising, life-saving. the world sprinted past us as i watched her in the driver's seat, my chest swelling and clenching to the beat of her fingers on the steering wheel. i leaned in to turn on the radio and my arm brushed her hand; my heart beat made a new home on the spot where our skin kissed. all the stations were full of mind-numbing static. every few seconds her head would turn away from me, looking into the darkness outside our moving sanctuary, looking for i-don't-know-what. i'm right here, i wanted to whisper, i'm right here, i wanted to smooth back her hair and touch my lips to her ear. red glow, stop light, noiseless. our ears were empty but my heart was full and she couldn't hear the thoughts i didn't dare to say so we stayed where we were as the car lurched forward again. in the absence of the stars all i could see was the moonlight brushing the slope of her nose, outlining the push of her lips. the rest of her body was dim and featureless but i had already memorized every inch. i tipped my head back on the hard plastic of the door—my vision shook, her silhouette blurred. the full moon was visible through the windshield but it wasn't as interesting as the milky glow of her kneecaps. i imagine her stopping the car, turning off the ignition. i imagine her right hand moving from the stick shift. i imagine her tasting like mint.