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A Breaking

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A Breaking

by Margaret Shelton

After the shell breaks in the little boy's hands, he will stare at them until the clear liquid dries in the sun. He will carry them to the creek at the edge of his backyard, put his hands into the water, let go, and watch them float away. After that day, he will not love birds anymore. He will not remember how heavy the egg sat in his hands, but he will remember the feeling of it breaking. Gentle cracks, fissures in a seamless sphere, the big hole where he pushed his finger through by accident, fleshy beak breaking through too early from the wrong side. When the creek carries the broken shells away, he will watch until they float around the bend and out of sight. He will blink a few times, turn, and walk back through the yard to the house. He will not look back. When he passes through the living room, he will not look at the bird book that he used to read. He will not open the book to the page with the robin's eggs to check their color. He will not need to ask if the egg was one of theirs. He knows the color of the robin's egg. It is the same color as his eyes.