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By Emily Carnevale

I check the radiators
and when I tell you they are fine
You say the clangs resonate between
your ribs at night.

So I give you my neck, like
the banister it has collected
so many dings that I have named them
after our parents.

You give me palms full of walnuts
and rub them against my throat.
“They can fix scratches you know.”
“Can they?”

At night, when you struggle
to find that woman in your dreams,
your head constantly hits the pillows—
You hit me once.

You woke; the sweat dotted your forehead like
wax drippings. “What happened?”
I touched your cheek; knew that earthmovers
Uprooted the layer of rock you

wear in the day. “You’re so cold,” I said.
Permafrost has kept your insides
Frozen in time— a grandfather clock
that remembers two moments a day.

You apologize and roll
back into sleep.
But the radiators in your chest expand
and consume more than half of the bed.

Like the way the swirls in your hair shrink

in steam, I condense the curve of my spine
and recede into the pillowcases
because our sheets never talk back.

You think I don't understand the cavities in your chest?