

Siblings

By Patricia Smith

Hurricanes, 2005

Arlene learned to dance backwards in heels that were too high.
Bret prayed for a shaggy mustache made of mud and hair.
Cindy just couldn't keep her windy legs together.
Dennis never learned to swim.
Emily whispered her gusts into a thousand skins.
Franklin, farsighted and anxious, bumbled villages.
Gert spat her matronly name against a city's flat face.
Harvey hurled a wailing child high.
Irene, the baby girl, threw pounding tantrums.
José liked the whip sound of slapping.
Lee just craved the whip.
Maria's thunder skirts flew high when she danced.
Nate was mannered and practical. He stormed precisely.
Ophelia nibbled weirdly on the tips of depressions.
Philippe slept too late, flailing on a wronged ocean.
Rita was a vicious flirt. She woke Philippe with rumors.
Stan was born business, a gobbler of steel.
Tammy crooned country, getting the words all wrong.
Vince died before anyone could remember his name.
Wilma opened her maw wide, flashing rot.

None of them talked about Katrina.
She was their odd sister,
the blood dazzler.

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