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HOW NOT TO SPILL

Dad has creases on his hands so thick they could split with a poke. He gestures for me to try so I do. His skin bends on a hinge and out spills every good and bad thing: cattails from our driveway in Peace River, oil underground, rocks too smooth to be useful. It washes out the floor so I watch and wade in.
Mom would never spill her hands like that. You could spend all day turning them over looking for a way in and never find it. Anything she holds dissolves into her muscles, flows clear through her veins like consommé. She tries to teach me to hold my hands shut too, to give them nothing.
I have a harder time. My need is hot and thick like alphabet soup, but I don't burst all at once. It seeps out of my fingernails first, my pores, then everywhere. Wracked and dripping, I float into myself while mom combs it away. Tells me to breathe and remember the rules. Walk backwards down hills. Take the elevator in a fire. Keep your hands still when they come for you.