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## Webs

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# Webs

Edward E. Brock

The glass is heard first, then the thump of the rock on the floor.  
We scuttle back into our dusty web and shiver.  
The heavy, lead stone thrown through our front-room window gleams with an iridescent coat of spray paint.  
This is the second brick this week, both with a less than empty threat, both with a scribbled, red octagon.  
I look to my wife and she looks back and we both cry silently while our children sleep.  
I sweep the glass into a corner, board another window.

Hours later when the streets have died quiet with night we peer from plywood's holes and see glowing phosphorescent lights buzzing.  
The tile around the pool in the courtyard shines a lurid white as the moon lays heavy on its surface.  
Dried leaves—the wither of fall—flutter into the dirty, murky, chlorinated water. They stagnate as a bloated rat carcass floats; a rotting freckle among unblinking celestial eyes.  
It looks like Mr. Montgomery.  
He went missing four days ago under the same less-than-empty, but still dismissed, threats.  
I wonder who will have to remove the body this time.  
It is dangerous in this jungle. It was dangerous in the jungle my family came from. It is dangerous where all around animals acting bigger, being bigger, forcing themselves bigger jump at throats exposed by cold, lonesome winds.  
The fields beyond our new village whine with an abandonment and mix with the sound of stolen children.  
My young ones whimper in the den of the nest and I hurry back, gutted, to

find our littlest gone—passed on to lush pastures, freer greens. Her legs and arms curl and cradle their empty, hallowed husk. We lose so many to these sleepless autumn nights. We lose so many to the fire descending upon our hearts. We bury her that night, tuck her in with a prayer, and return to a slandered, slurred door. My wife and I chat wondering how to keep the candle burning—how to keep the growing hunger at bay—for one more night. We are cold.

The next morning, in the quiet dawn, I pull my coat around tight, ready myself for work, step outside, then find myself face down in the pool's blue, reflective surface. There is a cut on the back of my head, and a small note stapled to my chest. My blood sinks to pool's floor. It's undulating cascades crimson jellyfish in an empty sea.

My partner's eyes are gray, cold, when she finds me floating. We have known that the changing of the leaves, the migration of the seasons, would mean the cold breath of winter would come soon. But as crunchy leaves clog the filter of the Key Inn Apartment's pool, we did not think it would be today. No one ever thinks it is today.