

Senior Division, Short Fiction
Connie Boland, Corner Brook
Cards Laid Out On The Table (an excerpt)

Between them, these women had lived 273 years.

“Relax,” Daphne scoffed. “Mind now. Dot’s been movin’ since the day she was born.”

“You won’t be, you don’t lay off them smokes,” Dot retorted. She finished her drink and reached for the bottle on the counter. “I need a bigger glass.” She opened a cupboard door, then rooted around inside.

“One or two when there’s company. Nothin’ to worry over,” Daphne said. She reached over Dot’s head to grab a pewter mug. “This do?”

Dot took the mug and held it toward the bare lightbulb dangling from the ceiling. She used the hem of her blouse to swipe dust from inside the mug, added amber liquid and two ice cubes. “Perfect.”

It was Friday evening. Supper dishes were washed, dried, and packed away. The plywood floor had been swept. The crib board was ready. “Chilly out there,” Jane said, bending down to open the stove.

“Christ sakes, don’t put more wood on,” Dot shouted, mopping her forehead with a moist paper napkin. “Open that window behind you, Flo. God damn hot flashes.”

Jane shoved two short sticks into the stove and slammed the door. “Nothing but dirt, hot flashes. You should get everything taken out.”