


The Dishwasher

Andrea S. Givens

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The dishwasher is old; it came with the house. It is not really a dishwasher, more like a sterilizer they use in child care centers to make sure dishes get good and hot so all the bacteria die. The cycle takes three minutes.

My mom stands to the left of the old, silver dishwasher, bending and placing, bending and placing, silverware and plates and cups and platters onto the tines.

I am to the right of the dishwasher, watching my mother load it, watching her bend, watching her pour the soap. We say nothing.

The counter is filled with dirty dishes. It will take forever for all of them to be cleaned. I offer to help.

She turns to me and says, “You killed your baby and you don’t even care.”