

The Beam

Anya froze with the mug halfway to her lips, coffee gently sloshing. It was there again. The patch of warm, morning sunlight seemed to sparkle and undulate on the tan tile floor of the kitchen like a living thing.

On an impulse from Anya, she and her wife, Magritte, bought the rundown Colonial era house last year and had been steadily renovating it, replacing the roof and flooring, repainting walls and finally, putting in new, vinyl windows. This window in the kitchen was the very last old one and they had agreed to keep it for a while longer.

The beautiful, ancient glass was rippled and flawed and made for interesting views when looking out at the gardens. And once in a while, in the early morning this happened: the moving light.

“What causes that?” Anya whispered, leaning forward on her chair and then getting up to move closer before the phenomenon ceased. It never lasted long. The only sounds were of birdsong outside and her own breath.

“Mags, c’mere! It’s happening again!” She called. Magritte called back unintelligibly from the other side of the house where she had been showering.

Anya stared, transfixed, at the shifting, almost staticky patterns within the beam of light. She stretched one trembling hand out to touch it and then pulled back when it appeared to almost shift towards her hand. “What the fuck?”

Without giving a moment’s thought, she splashed half of her coffee into the beam and watched as the liquid simply ceased to exist. “What the-?” She gasped. “No way!” A single drop of coffee had made it through and sat, glistening on the tile just beyond.

Anya stepped forward gingerly and reached out her hand, hearing Magritte walking through the house toward her, whistling. “Mags come see this!” She yelled before thrusting her hand into the beam.

Amazing: the light felt like warm seltzer water on her hand, bubbly, effervescent and somehow deeply pleasurable. She wriggled her fingers, liking the way the light made the skin look. And then, without warning, she was pulled through into the light.

Magritte ambled into the kitchen still toweling her damp hair a moment later, and asked, “What is it, love?” There was no sign of her wife other than the mug that lay on its side by a sunbeam in the center of the room, coffee puddled around it on the tile floor.

“Any?”