

Expertise

All these tender leaves, all these dry ones—the repairman came to fix my oven, or watch his buddy do it. He or they had it in so many pieces the fruit flies emerged from a buttcrack totally unnoticed. My cats were delighted, bent over and holding their bellies like human beings, little commas of silk turf among the wire nuts. Now they could eat all the house plants they wanted. Made me think of the time I overheard our Skippy make one of his many ironic comments to a colleague who had asked, I think blithely, “Why is it the sheets always get tangled around your ankles at night?” I’m pretty sure this never happens during the day, so it was a good, specific question. Skippy knew alright. “Ooohh,” he chortled, the torque of his torso almost pulling out the knot of his Hush Puppies—he was tying his shoes. “That’s because they *actually* turn into monsters in the night and try to strangle you!” He was almost panting when he said it, and he really did use the word *monsters*. I tell you, if you ask me, he truly is the big winner of every clever contest known to man. Isn’t the world such a funny place? I guess that’s because we have funny people teaching us funny things, like that stuff about real monsters, and how the pear-shaped ones lean over dusty appliances all day, or decide what is legal to teach. My cats couldn’t possibly know, to be *actually* laughing. Maybe they ate another black widow between them, or a crawdad.