

AMY LEACH

Comfortless

My Aunt Stella's down comforter arrived from Texas, finally, but smelling scorched, leaking feathers. A little light bulb in the car door burned a little hole in it. I have band-aided it up, but the feathers still escape because feathers want to fly. For fifty-three years Stella had been fastidious with the comforter, folding it away every morning in its plastic zippered case, when all it ever wanted was to get a little hole burnt in it. Goodbye seams, say the feathers: we are going to float!

When I am through losing my Aunt Stella's exultant feathers, I am going to fill the antique rose-colored comforter with sand and double band-aid the hole. I will use clean, fine Jamaica sand. Sand will never float away and leave me bereft. Sand will be fun to sleep under.

Sand will find the hole, when the band-aids pull away one night, and spill. I will wake up with handfuls of sand spilling out of my hands. Goodbye seams, goodbye hands, cries the sand: I am going to spill!

"Unkind hole!" I will cry. "Obstinate comforter, letting all my feathers out, letting all my sand out! How can I depend on you? Must I ever be tending to you, my difficult comforter, ever filling you with something new, which only ends up floating away or spilling? Must I live with no certainty, no continuity? I will call you Comfortless!"

In my exasperation I will run to the store and buy many chocolate mints and stuff my comforter with mints. "If you are going to have a hole," I will tell it, as I resolutely stuff it full, "I will turn you into a chocolate mint dispenser. When you release your contents (as you are always doing), I will get a treat." It will be a cunning plan, inspired by sheep, who also eat their bedding. But it will not be quite cunning enough: chocolate mints, unlike grass, melt, and do not hesitate to coat a warm sleeping person with goo.

I will wake up as Chocolate-mint Person, I will stumble to the door, unhappily attracting sand and feathers on the way; I will stand on the lawn; I will look up at the stars and bleat, "Stars! I am having trouble with my comforter! You are so serene! How can I be serene like you?" They will look at each other knowingly, for they

have answered this question millions of times. And then they will twinkle back to me, “Person, you will never be like a star. Things for you will always float away and spill and melt. The closest thing to serenity, for you, is laughing.” I will recognize this as true. I will stand there, just another sandy, feathery, chocolate-mint person laughing on the lawn.