

## The Fury of the Filament

by Michael Patrick Brady

*The* unfinished refrigerator glides toward me across the rollers of the conveyor belt, coming to rest as the brakes kick in with a great pneumatic sigh. I exhale with it and unfurl my wires. The red one coils around the terminal of the compressor, threading through the perforations in the plastic molding. The black one knits together the thermostat and the interior light. I bring them together at the door switch and prepare to leave my signature.

My hands weave the wires like a cat's cradle. I am beyond schematics, working in a realm of pure inspiration. My nostrils fill with the smoke of tinned solder; the iron smolders between my fingertips. When I finish, I seat the prongs of the power cord into the outlet. With the door open, the bulb inside the refrigerator blooms with light. I extend a finger from my free hand to test the door switch, pushing it in. The light is extinguished.

But ten seconds later, the light flickers back to life even though I'm holding the switch. I smile at my sabotage, unplug the unit, and drop my fist onto the red, rubber button that starts the belt, sending the refrigerator to the final station for packaging and shipment.

There are hundreds, maybe thousands of my refrigerators in the world, hard wired to do my bidding. I like to imagine them glowing defiantly behind their closed doors, flashing secrets at the crisper or the butter dish, their owners none the wiser. I think about milks, cucumbers, and potato salads spoiling under the pitiless photons, the subtle spikes in temperature and the slow bleed of kilowatt hours. The furious filaments and their blazing incandescence. They burn unseen in unsuspecting kitchens, the bulbs I've set alight. And no one knows but me.

