

Fleary & Demolition

Fleary caught wind of noises slipping in through the cracked windows of her sleep. There was a bulldozer, its opened mouth toothless but ready to eat like a hellbent hurricane. Fleary thrashed under bedsheets. Her skin grew armor. The windows shook from the downdraft of the politicians' conquest. She heard a scatter of ibises calling *Fleary! Fleary!* as the Miami moon lit the orange scythes of their beaks. White feathers ruffled her deep, and her hand reached for a matchbox. In the shadows, Demolition lingered outside her door with a court order and let out a howl resembling some feral spell. *This is my house!* Fleary hollered and yanked open an explosion. The sky rang with the rub of wood, the whine of fiery wind in Overtown. *This homeplace was passed from my mother and my mother's mother, so get on out of here before I beat you down!* Fleary trumpeted. The machine of Demolition's intentions scrubbed the shore. Broad waves picked up. The moon ran behind the clouds as a racket rose inside the flames shooting out of Fleary's mouth. Demolition whirled around, ripping through Fleary's hibiscus and bougainvillea. *This land is mine now!* he barked and dumped handfuls of sea foam on the flames. *Demolition, I'm gonna take you out!* And Fleary used the knife blade of her flame to gut his corruption. Next day, ibises and townspeople gathered around the scorched dozer. The city commission took off their hats. Fleary glanced at the bright sunlight strolling in and out of her pristine house.