

Mercedes Lawry

STICK GIRL

The girl was worn down practically to a bone. Every hallelujah had taken a toll. Too often there was no fresh food. She failed to complain, having come to the conclusion this was her fate, amen. She expected to die early and that was all right with her. There was a limit to righteous suffering. She would have liked to hold a baby in the crook of her arm. But then she'd have to pity the poor thing and know a deeper heartbreak. Not worth it. The winds were cold and the house rattled. She could see a couple of trees out the kitchen window, and the vast sky, that was a comfort now and then. She hardly cast a shadow anymore. I'm a stick girl, she thought, like one of those people children draw when they first take up a pencil. There was a murmur of prayer from the next room as there usually was this time of night. Hum and huddle of insects. She sat in the torn green chair and looked at her hands, the blue veins risen up like hills on the map of a sad country.