

Ready

(Excerpt)

It is your day off. You are on your knees in the sitting room, retouching the baseboards. Butter Cream Luxury to contrast with the teal accent wall—you really need the security deposit back. The paint fumes smell like car exhaust. As they roil your queasy stomach, you wish you were dead.

Being dead would solve several immediate problems. Like the unholy hangover making your brush-hand shake. You stop, take a small sip of Diet Coke, feel just the tiniest bit better, and take another.

While sipping, you stare out the window at the widower's yard, which is empty, front and back. Heat shimmers in the air above the hedge, Tennessee August served up thick and humid.

You are thankful for the state-of-the-art air-conditioning, which you should probably turn off because you're going to have to get used to a mobile home with a two-burner hot plate and a fan.

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