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KOREAN CINEMA

FINGER

1. The first time a boy fingered me I was too excited to move. After a while he asked if I was dead.

2. To lay with blame. To remain blameless oneself. A finger jabbing at a photo, glossy and unreal, with real consequences for the jabbed. For the jabber also, though fewer studies have been done.

SARAH FRAN WISBY

FIRE

BOY IN SMOKE

I am all over the back room with its smoke. Back there you've got ballast, says the woman in a uniform from the smoke. The sidewall shifts and her arms open on the wall, crucifixion-ish, esque, only not. The smoke—no, it's not the smoke so much as the Hey! Hey! I keep hearing—makes me crane. The window is letting the smoke escape, it's the child who has my attention, his Hey! coming from above the smoke, he's that tall, a stalky boy, and stocky. Maybe it's his smoke. The ballast shifts and the woman in the uniform closes her arms along the wall.

We all sit down together.

A no-alarm fire, the child says, his pupils saucers.

The smoke thickens so much the woman disappears, a fork to her mouth, with the ballast. TV shows could be on the other side of it, in iPod image.

I, for one, am wondering whether I should worry. The child is eating ravenously, like a raven, head down, sharp bites, as if the plate held the recent dead, which of course, unless that bit is actually wiggling, it does.

I chop mine and worry.

We're all coughing—I can hear the woman if I can't see her. I reach out to pat her back but the smoke or she shifts.

The child is finished. He looms over me. I take his hand and we feel along the wall. Oh, my god, says the child, Let me out of here.

I am, I say. This way, I say.

But the door is too small for him. I should have known, didn't you talk to that woman? he says. He changes places, he retreats.

The sidewall shifts again. The woman scissors two yellows flags in a signal. I should know what that means, those flags swung that way. He's too heavy to stand there?

Lights go on in the front, and the woman drops the flags, puts on her hard hat. The child is climbing the front so he can put his hand out the window. My fingers are laced under his foot, which is very big. I'm not much of a lifter but he can make it anyway, he throws his arms up, he grows more.

The front light flashes, voices but not heads in silhouette suggest Help. The woman clears the table; no one else will do it. I am touching my mouth to feel for Thanks, his foot dangling over my mouth, he is lifting himself up and out while the smoke hurts.

The woman insists, Eat this, and it doesn't move, it is something the child has left behind.