



Service Call

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Once so shiny our appliances, sleek workhorses
primed for every task. To sear in a flash or simmer
slow and steady, to wash deeply in a churning fury
or gentle delicates with a tender touch.

Now, like us, their repertoire narrows, certain tasks
no longer automatic, switches gone awry. Silent
efficiency gives way to creaks and rumblings
as they strain to complete their cycles.
Now and then, total breakdown.

The breezy repairmen who come to diagnose and treat
express doubt about their continuing utility. “At best,
it’s a temporary fix, Ma’am. It’s really just a matter of time.”
But it still works, I protest, and catch the faint tinge of pity
(or is it contempt?) that briefly shades the practiced friendliness.

Stopgap repairs negotiated, our vigilance recedes.
Weeks later we’re awakened by a surreal clamor
in the bowels of our refrigerator. Knocks
and bangs alternate with the sound of ice
reverting to liquid; a steady drip, drip, drip
— imminent meltdown.

In our hazy assessment, we choose the action
that offers immediate relief. Straining to reach
in the gap behind, we pull the plug on our stainless-steel
jukebox and slip back into our still warm bed.

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