

Four Stories

Apartment 4002

The old man collects books and their directly correlating dust,
His daily cocktails of pills in pockets, packaged by a daughter who only cares when she's there
He sits by the window and writes, wishing he saw his grandson more
So his years of knowledge wouldn't be wasted on useless things like paper and the early onset of Alzheimer's.
After all, his mind and paper can't put their wealth of advice, learned from experiences, into practice on their own.
Paper can, however, be folded.

The old man makes a paper airplane and hopes his expired pilot's license won't fail him this time.

Apartment 3004

Her father asks if she thinks he's abusive again and she quickly tells him no like usual
But when she makes it back to her room, she begins to wonder if what she says is truth.
If you have to ask that question, her friend always tells her, you already know the answer.
She pulls her cardigan closer around her, moves out to the balcony,
And watches the buildings until her throat feels better.
The sky is a misty grey but she hasn't let it rain in a long time.

She watches folded paper fall and remembers going to an air show with her old dad.

Apartment 2006

He scowls at his room's nameplate, both in frustration with the finicky lock and irony.
The year two thousand and six mars his lease file and screams about purely technical losses in divorce
He doesn't miss her as much as he does his dog, precious time,
And a will to live, though that seemed to escape him long before he signed any sort of document.
He hasn't stopped coughing since last year's cold and he isn't sure how much longer he can blame the cigarettes.
Smoking a pack isn't what's going to kill him, not when rapidly multiplying cells are already doing the trick.

He taps his cigarette ash onto a shakily folded origami airplane and closes another door behind him.

Apartment 1002

The writer does what most writers do best and stares at an embarrassingly empty page,
Wishing that, for once, a story would just come, words filtering without restraint through her
fingers

But the realistic part of her knows it doesn't work that way, and that "work" is a key element in
that statement.

Still, she opts for the opposite, and finds herself drawn back to the balcony where nothing sits—
Except for a slightly crumpled paper airplane, folded with shaky precision, stained with cigarette
ash.

She unfolds and does what a writer does second best, taking inspiration from the simple act of
looking up.

The writer sits back down and begins to sing their stories, accompanied only by the clicking of a
keyboard.