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He speaks freely of their relationship, he says, we're working on Helen today, or, we're not working on Helen, she's in the freezer

The scientist's wife asks, why her? he says, because her cells multiply with astonishing speed

Each night she wonders if he brings pieces of Helen home on his hands, she is afraid her rival will take hold in the mattress, the kitchen, move into the house

He is proud, he boasts: the day after he put Helen in the freezer, he found parts of her growing in a neighboring lab
This is what
the scientist's wife
knows about her rival:
she was black
she died
in a state hospital
in the year her husband
was born,
and the cancer
which killed her
lives on, growing
even in a freezer

The scientist's wife
wonders why
no one asks:
what kind of a life
would grow something
that terrible?
in the scientist's wife's
opinion, Helen Lane
has given new meaning
to the meek
who shall inherit
the earth,
that thing which
Helen's womb made
is more powerful
than all of them

Each day her husband
leaves home to study
another woman's parts,
she begs him not to,
someday, she tells him,
you'll bring her
home, I just know it

He shows her
photographs
of Helen's cells
growing,
she tells her husband
he's looking for clues
in all the wrong places,
it's not there,
she says,
the answer

it's not there