Until It Fades

The bowl was heavier than Vera had imagined. She set it on a dish towel and struck it with the wooden mallet. While it was still vibrating, she got up to close the window. By the time she came back, it had gone quiet.

She tried again. This time she thought about the call she had to make the next day and silently rehearsed how she would say hello. After the fourth strike, she set the mallet down. The window was still open, and she could hear the faint sound of the elevator.

The last thing she heard was a very fine note. A few seconds earlier, she would have said the bowl had gone quiet. She held one hand close to the rim without touching it.

The next morning she dialed the number. When the other person answered, they said “hello” and waited. Vera set both feet on the floor before she spoke.