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End Destination

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End Destination

Globe Skimmer dragonflies can fly across the entire Indian Ocean—of course, they can't rely exclusively on their body fat stores, the wind has to be on their side, Ba says. I don't believe Ba. Part of the reason is because it's Ba and I have a daughterly duty to be skeptical of everything he says. The other part of the reason is because 5 centimeters of dragonfly crossing 2,000 kilometers of open ocean seems absurd—I can't even run to the playground and back without feeling like my heart is being sucked out. Wind can only do so much. Dragonflies remind me more of the stale toothpicks that'd snap between my teeth while trying to pry out threads of beef drop flank and corn kernels, although Ba is convinced everything is built with purpose, that's how nature works: wing surfaces corrugated to counteract turbulence, broad hindwings for gliding, special thoracic musculature to improve long distance flight. Then what are we built for? I ask. Ba thinks for a moment before lecturing me for getting distracted. We are learning about energy consumption and metabolic rates and body efficiency in school and Ba is trying to prove dragonflies are biological engineering miracles. He goes on about active flight and gliding flight as I scratch my fingernail against the table. My sister is supposed to be back soon. The only reason why I'm still listening to Ba is to cover for her. She's a rock climber with fingers that could crack rocks, skilled enough to boulder in the wild with a crash pad and water bottle. Ba thinks she lost her way because she spends more time browning under the sun than thinking about her future—life is meaningless without family and kids, Ba tells us regularly. Like Globe Skimmers are built to traverse oceans, women's bodies are built to give. I look it up later: 40% make the migration in the autumn, 15% in the spring. I wonder when she's coming back, how far she's going.