



ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

Anita Kulina

THE SMELL IS ALWAYS WHAT I REMEMBER FIRST. That sickly sweet, acrid smell.

I was, I don't know, probably nineteen. Maybe twenty. I'd been working there for close to a year. I typed purchase orders, though mostly what I did some days was run errands for the lady who worked at the other desk. She kept the books. Enormous volumes, almost a foot thick. They were stored in a cabinet by the front door. One of my jobs was to carry them back and forth to her desk.

There were two big books. Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable. She wrote in them with a fountain pen, little numbers in blue or black. Adding and subtracting in her head. Checking the numbers at the end of the month with the clackety-clack of an adding