

Game of Cigarettes

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His hands are calloused and rough.

His fingertips are stained yellow.

Not the kind of yellow that is full of sun kisses and dandelions,
but the kind of yellow when an apple core has sat on the counter for too long.

Or, in this case, a father who has wasted their time for too long.

An index finger and middle finger holds up the rolled-up tobacco.

A thumb lays on the bottom for extra support.

It's been about twenty years of wisps
of smoke on the porch, and grating coughs.

He's focused on a soccer game on his phone-- I swear it's been hours

When will you quit?

I stare at the crushed cigarettes piled on the ground next to his foot.

He doesn't respond for a second or two,

flicks the end of the cigarette onto the porch and without looking up from the game murmurs,

We aren't even at halftime yet.