F. J. Bergmann - Blight

The vaccine was only in the experimental stages, so I thought I’d wait until it was FDA-approved, with TV commercials and full-page ads in glossy magazines, but a free, auto-administering sample came in the mail. I opened it at the kitchen table. The first side effect (which I persuaded myself wasn’t really there) manifested as only slight dullness filming the shiny new vinyl, then crumbs, crusts, dirty dishes, clots of hair and dead insects began to accumulate (which I found harder to ignore, but it’s not nice to notice defects so I pretended everything was just so). Laminate began lifting from the countertop along the edge of the sink and curling back; the sink itself rusted badly, leaking into the cabinet below and onto the filthy tile. The enameled finish on the appliances flaked away and the doors fell off the refrigerator, which promptly spewed its contents all over the by-now-truly-disgusting floor. Then, in a spate of utter putrefaction, the oozing cabinets crumbled completely and the ceiling began to drip and sag downward. Suddenly all the light fixtures gave way simultaneously and pink fireballs rocketed from the electrical outlets. We’ll never have to go back into that kitchen again if we eat out for the rest of our lives—if it’s not already too late.

first appeared in *Lupine Lunes*