



Spring 2004

## The Forum: Spring 2004

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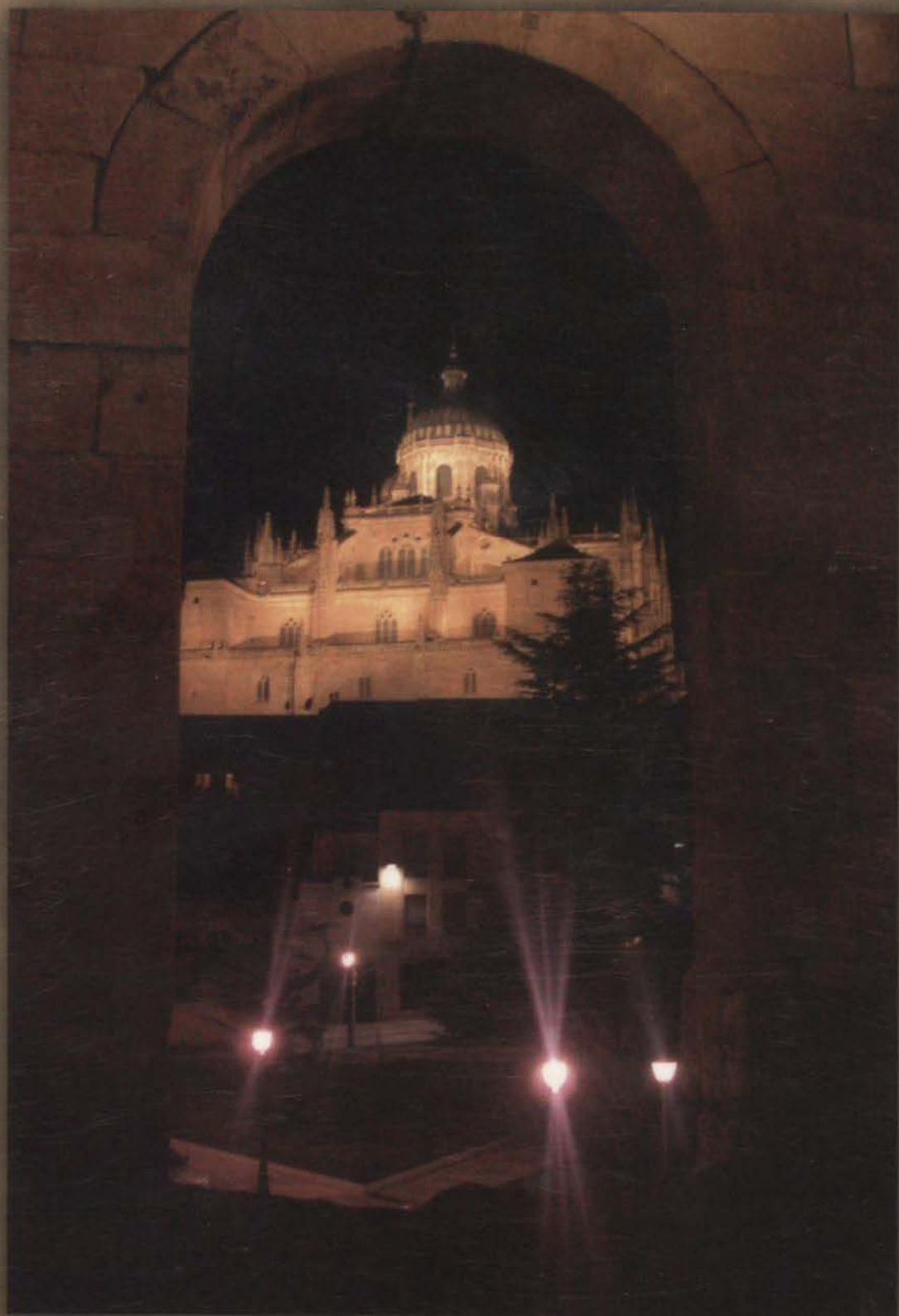
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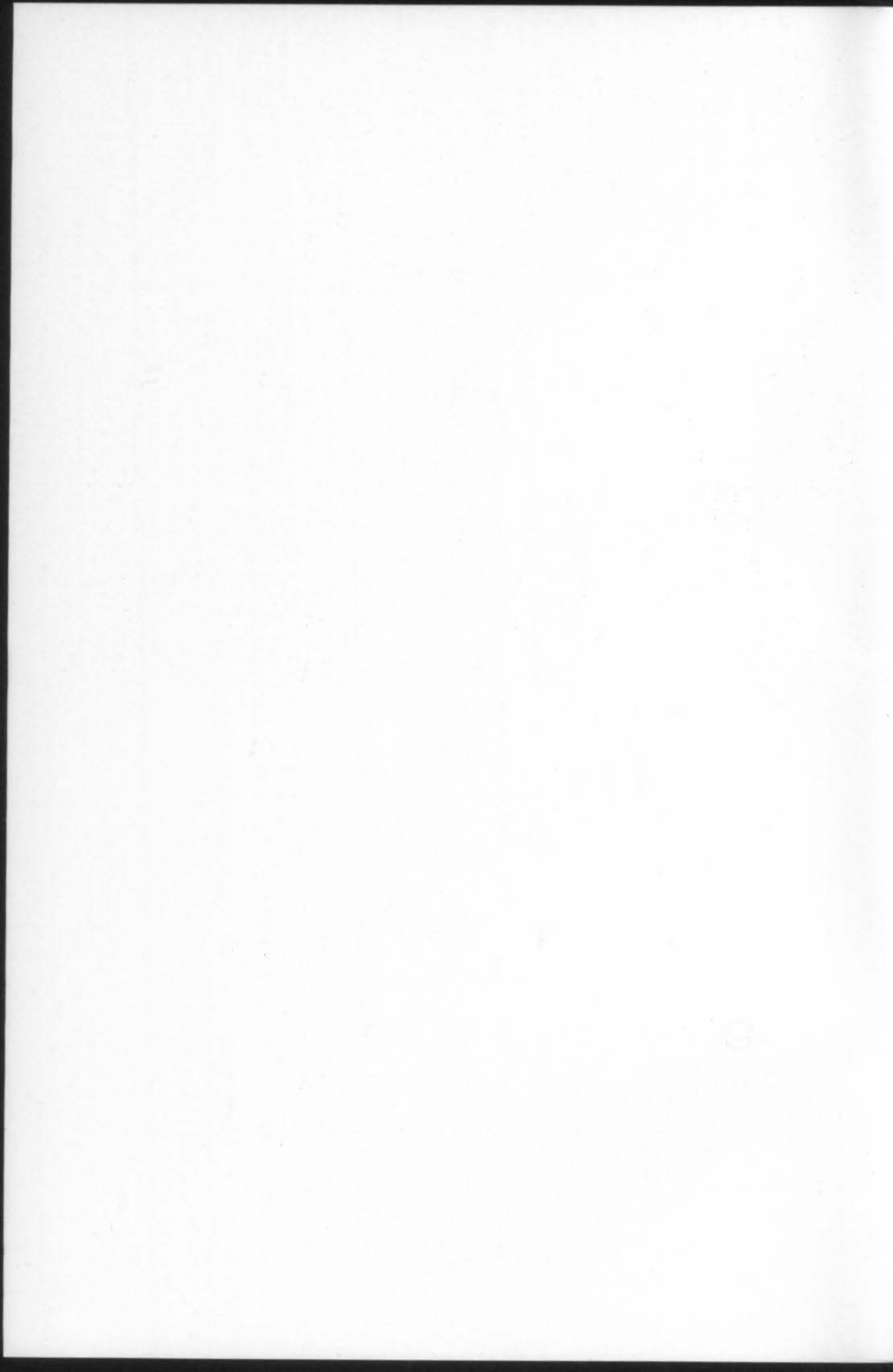
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# the Forum

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## Heather Monasky

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**T**ruth always exists along 2 different paths. It's just one is prettier –  
Morality was conceived here.  
And along the vine it branched out from it practiced being burlesque.  
And I was one of the nominees.  
You may think this is another sappy complaint, but for the sake of my existentialism I assume I'm not trite.

My momma ordered one of those tv gimmicks the other day, because she's down and out.  
I felt bad; then I didn't know who I'd save if I could, myself or her. But I feel privileged too, that some indifferent universe out there manifests itself by being insidious to me.

I hate pastels; they're so bland, even if I do look good in lavender. And I try not to let other people see me, cuz' why would they think of me as opposite or even 90 degrees to what my shit and I am? Pink and orange look good side by side—so do pink and red. The definitions of me switch with people and time. Not intentionally by me, I don't think.  
Maybe intentionally by something that can't think.

Casey Gordon

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*My Mouth Telling*

October 2, 2003

I saw a man on television today while walking through my living room. I'd left the TV on for some noise, I guess—makes me feel less lonely. He caught my eye and my heart stopped. I swear it made a whomp, like how a heartbeat would sound in slow motion. The man on the television was my brother. Well, not really. He was a skinny man in his mid-thirties, and his nose pointed like it could hurt something. This accusing nose caught my attention. I wondered if it hurt—his skin being so tight on his face and all. He looked old, like a vet, like he'd seen death and didn't care. The fuzz on his face was gray and stubbly, but I'll bet it was soft to the touch. I would have caressed his face tonight while making dinner for my husband. All I could think about was the softness of his skinny face.

His hair was the color of his whiskers, but his mouth was young and thin. This is how I knew he suffered. His body, his eyes, his hair, his nose—all old and scarred. His mouth and the words spewing out of it—alive. I knew he was infected. HIV, maybe AIDS. He was no vet, had not yet witnessed death. I'll bet this is what my brother looked like. I never saw him after he got sick. Didn't want to. But when I saw the man on TV today, I knew. That is what Mark looked like—at the end. I hated the way he looked, but forever for me, he is Apollo.

October 7, 2003

I haven't kept a journal since I was a teenager. My husband asked me today what I planned to write about, and I didn't really have an answer for him. My thoughts, I suppose, I told him.

Why do people write down their thoughts? Are our memories not enough? Are they so faulty that we cannot trust them years, months, or even minutes into the future? If our impressions of reality and our thoughts on events are inherently inaccurate, what then is real? What am I actually writing about? My thoughts, I suppose.



I haven't really thought about Mark in fifteen years. Fifteen years ago he sat my mother and me down in the kitchen where we grew up. I remember old whiskey bottles in the cupboards. My dad's. The smell, the bitter taste of whiskey. When I a girl, I always thought it was my dad—the smell, the bitter taste of my dad. I was a teenager before I realized it was the whiskey, and I was a mother before I realized maybe I was right as a girl.

I'm glad he wasn't there that night fifteen years ago—my dad, that is. In the kitchen. At that solid oak table. It was the only nice thing in the place. I rub my scar right now, remembering how I hid under that table from Dad when he came home from work. I never ever knew why he was so late, but the later he was, the more my eyes darted. They darted at every noise, every movement. I prayed to God to give me eyes like a spider. If He would only make me a spider, I would crawl into a corner on the ceiling and would know exactly when someone was coming to thwack me. Maybe I wouldn't be able to move in time, but at least I'd know. If I'm being honest, I have to say that I did want to move in time. What a sound it would be to hear the wall echo with the thwack meant for me. That's when I started praying for ten legs instead of eight.

But since I wasn't a spider and knew deep down inside that I'd never be a spider, especially one with ten legs, I hid. Nothing can penetrate this table, I thought. Little did I realize that everything is penetrable. I'd always bump my head getting down there. That's how I got this scar right above my left temple. It makes me laugh when I think about it. The table—that's what gave me the scar. Ironic.

That night fifteen years ago gave me yet another scar, obtained at the ripe old age of 29, only this scar I've never been able to put my finger on. Mark sat us down, I chewed my nails, and Mom poured herself a glass of whiskey but didn't drink it. Maybe she knew what was coming and wanted Dad there. He had died three years earlier.

"I'm gay," Mark said.

Mom gave a smile, but it didn't extend beyond her lips. I gave a blank stare and sipped Mom's whiskey.

I realize right at this moment, watching my daughter sitting in the windowsill and knowing my love for her is a love greater than my heart can tolerate, that I hated him for it. My heart seems to ooze for my children, but I have no room for its love. The cavity protecting this particular muscle is full.

October 9, 2003

I get upset sometimes, at things that are, things I can't control. I like control.

I just got back from buying a cellular telephone. I figured that since

the world had entered the 21st century, I might as well join, but not without caution. No, sir, I was not getting ripped off today. I did my homework. On the Internet all night, I was. Now, that's another thing I've yet to embrace—the Internet. Nonetheless, I was ready this morning and eager to buy my phone. I knew what kind of plan I wanted, what style of phone was best, what options would benefit me—tons of stuff like that.

Still, I think I got screwed. I froze, couldn't speak up, bought the first one I saw, and thanked the salesman as I walked out the door pissed off at my stupid self.

I love control. I'm no good at it, but I love it just the same. I want to grab things, grab them tight. Tight. I curl my toes as I write the word, "tight." My body tenses. Bad things out. "Go away," I say to the bad things, like a child. I can control. I can. But I can't feel. I didn't feel Mark's death. He deserved it.

I own a cell phone now. We're getting rid of our house phone and are just going to use the cell phone. With all the things of which I am uncertain, there is one truth in this world: God invented cell phones. Correction—God invented the power button on my cell phone, a tiny button on this tiny device that fits comfortably in the palm of my hand and connects me to a world I know is out there. If I would have had a cell phone that day (it was November fourth, the year Clinton defeated Bush, Sr., the day actress Regina Carrol died of cancer, the day Mark's body could no longer defend itself against a disease they used to call "consumption"—a disease treatable since the 40's) I would have turned it off. A call with only my mother's sobs on the other end. A damn phone call. If I'd have had a cell phone that day, Mark would still be alive—or would I have just gotten an e-mail?

October 29, 2003

The television is on again, but this time I'm watching and listening. We're supposed to get a snow storm tomorrow. The first one of the season, says the weather guy. The first one is always exciting. The kids play outside, not realizing that it's cold and not caring that their mothers force them to wear mittens and stocking hats that don't match. Watching the news, I'm attentive and interested, and, for me, to be interested in anything is a feat. "An attention-span the size of my fingertip." That's what my Mom used to say to me. She'd point her index finger at me as she said it—long and elegant, her fingers. They remind me of the man's lips - long and thin, but full of life and knowledge and power. The man on the television knew power through his words, since it was all he had left in his frail body. Mom's finger knew that power. I remember Mark's fingers.

I wonder what AIDS looks like in your body. I wonder if I'd have cut Mark on his finger, would his blood have been putrid and green? AIDS

looks like nothing, I'm sure, but shouldn't it? I remember the first time I got my period. I was playing with Mark in the living room. Again, the television was on, but we weren't watching. In those times it wasn't on to fill the silence; that came years later. Mark tripped me. On purpose, I tell you, but if he were here, he'd tell you it was an accident. It hurt, yeah, but I only felt really funny an hour later. I went to our bathroom and ran out screaming. I told him that I was dying and it was his fault, so of course he cried. Boy, was I glad he cried. I called him a bastard, not knowing what it meant, and not realizing that it was probably more true to call him that than it was to call him any other cuss word. The blood in my panties was a sign of life, the brown color a soothsaying of my gift as a woman. I didn't know at the time that life is a brownish red, like the color of a fiery sunset; at least in my mind it is. So I wonder now, at age 44, feeling my uterus turn against me in the guise of hot flashes, what does death look like?

I want to cut Mark. If he were here now I'd ask, "Can I cut you?" He wouldn't let me, but I'd ask him just as well. Is it green? Yellow? Fuchsia? Infection oozing from a simple paper cut?

AIDS doesn't kill you. It lets things kill you.

October 30, 2003

We told everybody Mark died of tuberculosis. He did, I guess. AIDS doesn't kill you.

November 4, 2003

I think Mark died in silence. His body just let him down, deciding it wasn't friends with his brain anymore. And neither was willing to befriend his soul. His brain and his body got together, just on this one occasion, and decided to gang bang his soul. Maybe they were mad—mad because his soul wasn't sick. Yeah, people told him his soul was sick, but not anybody who knew.

I've heard that people with AIDS get lesions on their bodies. They give some kind of medical explanation for it, although exactly what it is escapes me right now. I think they're wrong. There is no medical explanation; it's a branding, like a scarlet letter, or a yellow armband, or the stripes on a prison suit. It's the body acting out against the soul, blaming, pointing a finger. Not a finger like my mother's, but a bony finger, as bony as that man's nose.

"Look," says the body. "Look at what sin this evil soul has committed. Look at him. Laugh at him. Pity him and tell your children not to stare, although you are doing exactly that. Look."

AIDS looks like war. Perhaps that is why the man on the television looks like a veteran. He's witnessed the defeat of his soul at the hand of his

body. And his mouth, his beautiful untouched mouth, is a bird, a hawk, invulnerable, flying high above the battle. No, not a hawk, a dove, maybe, holding on to a single olive branch, knowing its simple task is not to prevent, not to save, but to tell.

Yes, the soul is the victim when it comes to AIDS. Not the body. Those doctors didn't tell Mark anything about his soul, but everybody else did. They saw him branded and metaphorically stoned him. I wanted to tell Mark about his soul. I want to tell him today that I see it, and I give it a clean bill of health. His bony, whiskery mouth would've smiled.

November 9, 2003

I went shopping with my daughter today. She's my baby. Twelve. She was born the year Mark got sick and is sealed forever with his given name. Marka, we named her. I have only girls and decided one had to have a family name. Marka isn't too creative, I know, but we made it work.

Mom said that when Mark heard about Marka, he cried. I only saw him cry once.

Marka and I went shopping this Sunday afternoon, and I saw a man.

We were leaving the mall, hands so full of plastic bags that we couldn't carry another. I smiled at Marka and she smiled back when we passed the Christmas decorations already on display. Her smile seemed sacred and forgiving today. Fitting, I figured—it is Sunday.

We had parked outside of J.C. Penny and were walking through the store to the parking lot. Home seemed like such a nice idea. Almost out the door, walking past the shoe section, I saw a man. I saw a man, and he reminded me of Mark. I figured it was just because I've been thinking about him so much lately, but I couldn't shake the feeling I had. I needed to look at him, so I turned. Not knowing how my feet moved, I turned, and Marka followed without asking why. Her hand brushed mine and I felt a familiar tinge that I couldn't recognize in the moment.

I don't need shoes. I do not need them, yet I bought shoes today. His name was Phil, this man, and he helped me buy shoes on this very Sunday afternoon. In him I saw a man—a strong, living man—who was Mark. I bought shoes. Ugly shoes with red and yellow logos. One on the left side of the left shoe, one on the right side of the left shoe, one on the left side of the right shoe, and one on the right side of the right shoe. Four logos on two ugly shoes. Maybe I'll use the laces for something. You can always use shoelaces because something always needs to be tied together or held by a good strong knot. I can definitely use those shoelaces, but I hate the shoes, and I'm glad I hate them, although I'm not sure why. I don't hate the man who sold them to me. Phil. I like him.

I forgave Mark today, this day on which I bought the shoes. The shoes with four ugly red and yellow logos—like a sign from God.

Okay, so it's not a burning bush.

November 9 (later)

I wonder when Mark forgave me, or if he even has. I don't think so. Maybe he'll forgive me when I throw the shoes in the trash.

December 20, 2003

We learned about Greek mythology that day, a bunch of eleven-year-olds all sitting in desk clusters talking of a magical history. I was enthralled. People used to believe there were these characters out there, protecting them, watching them, kind of like Santa Claus. I loved school.

My mom used to lay my clothes out for me before I would go to school. She woke me up in the morning by turning on a lamp beside my bed. I'd pretend to sleep, but really I watched her out of the corners of my eyes. She'd go to my dresser propped up on one side by *Mein Kampf* (it was the thickest book my mother could find when one of the back legs broke), and she'd pull out a shirt of the right warmth. She would then search for pants to match, since I wouldn't wear jeans. I was a girl, dammit, and it killed me not to wear a dress, but the winter weather banished me to pants for at least four months out of the year. After finding an outfit, she'd set my clothes on the radiator. This is my favorite memory of my mother. Not the day she watched me deliver Marka, not the day she allowed me to attend college two states away, not the day she tried to teach me the words to her favorite Emily Dickinson poem. Putting on warm clothes after taking a lukewarm shower gave me a feeling I carry with me every day.

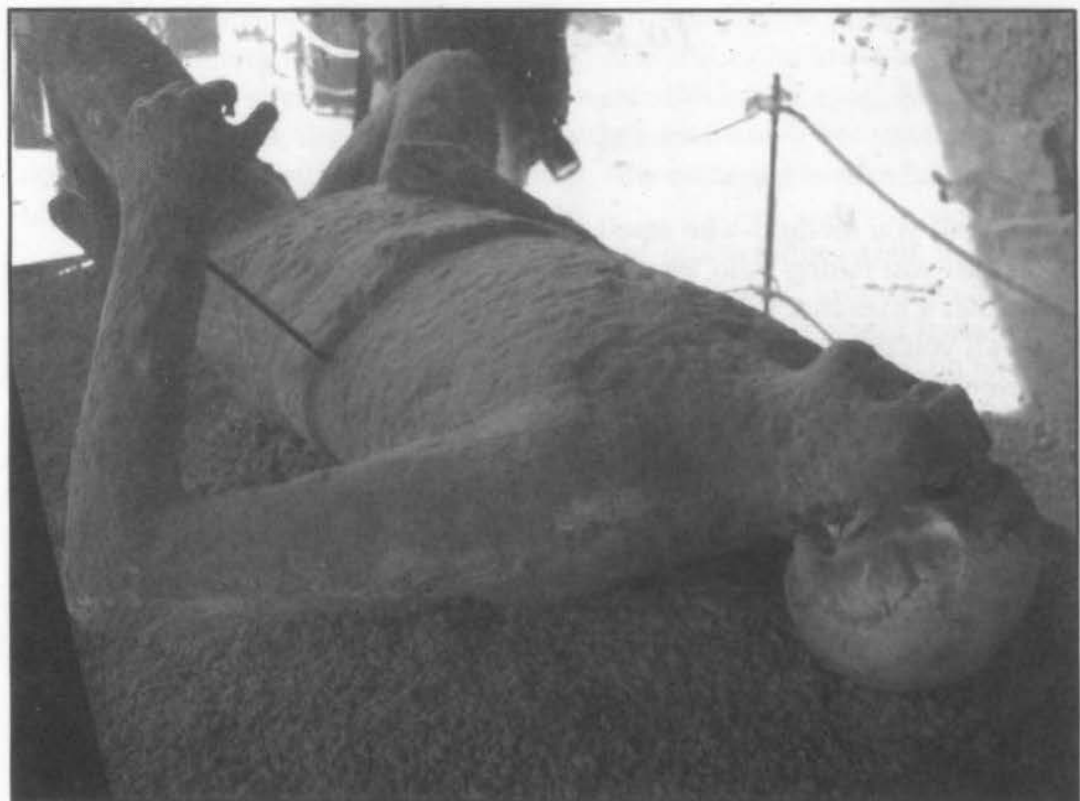
Mark was two years younger than me, so we went to the same elementary school for four years. It was a cloudy day, and muddy, too, but not cold. Recess came. I gazed that entire thirty minutes into the sky, trying to find something, trying to catch the gods looking down on me. Sometimes I still stare at the sky, but I don't search for the same things I did as a fifth grader. I see faces in the clouds, hoping to see mine and hoping to finally know that I've lost it to the sky, to the gods. That would be okay with me. But I don't. I see my mother's face, her cheeks a little saggy, the way old women's faces often get. I see my father's face, but it looks young, like pictures I'd seen of him before I knew the man he'd become. His mouth was truthful then, as it is in the clouds. The clouds are silent, but that's okay with me as well.

I lost my head in the clouds for the first time that day and fell. I fell smack on my butt in the fresh mud from light morning showers. My right hand took some of the brunt and was bleeding. The red blood mixed with the brown, wet dirt and made an interesting color. I stared at that hand for

a second but was jolted back to the playground to find myself engulfed in embarrassment. One scary thing about embarrassment—it doesn't kill you. No, nobody has ever literally died of embarrassment. Embarrassment doesn't kill you—it lets things kill you. One of the children looked at me long and looked at me good. He kicked mud on my cornflower blue corduroys. Just a little at first, to test me. To see what I'd do. To see how it felt. He liked it and kicked more. The mud was chilly as it seeped through my pants.

I saw Mark through a tear on the brim of my eye that was threatening to jump. His image was blurry, but I could see him shaking like a piece of tissue paper. He walked to me in slow motion; his Velcro shoes squished with every step. I was startled that I could hear his tiny black and brown tennies. He seemed frightened, but his face was clear, his shoulders square. He was nine, for Christ's sake. He reached for my hand and pulled me up. I was a noodle—couldn't feel my legs. He didn't know I saw, but I remember those glossy eyes. It was the first and only time I saw him cry.

Mark held my hand all the way home repeating the lines that, unlike me, he'd taken the time to learn from my mother. Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul and sings the tune the without words and never stops at all.



*Beth Eslinger*

Elizabeth Blazek

---

*To Be Wanted*

Oh all you mothers who smell of eternity and cigarettes  
Oh all of you fathers who leave your little girls to roam the earth in  
search of a man that will never replace your indifference  
And all you people who bare unwanted children as a desperate attempt to  
please your fucking egos and salvage your miscarried marriages  
Those children live on far after your temporary desires for them die.  
Oh all you spring time part time mothers replaced by psychotherapists  
and Prozac  
Oh all you spring time lovers replaced by tequila and poetic pills  
Substitute nurturers come and go like the night's breath that let your  
key in my lock.  
My mourning sticky lips are parted, departing along with your footsteps  
as the sun's rays knock upon these window pains.  
I remember his eyes because they stare back at me every time I look in  
the mirror, but mine stay fixed unlike his and mine see me unlike his.  
Where do those mothers go and fathers roam?  
What becomes of all these unwanted children who grip sheets in the  
moonlight holding their breath waiting for the phone to ring and call them  
back  
And call them home?



## Tessa Sandstrom

---

### *Again Tomorrow*

She climbed up the stairs slowly, concentrating on making it up without stumbling and falling. She didn't care if her dad heard her. He was practically deaf anyway, so the chances were slim in any case. She heard her friends spin the tires on the gravel as they sped out of her yard and flew down the gravel road back towards town. She managed to take her sweater hood off before she collapsed on the bed.

It felt as though she had just put her head on the pillow when her dad bellowed from the bottom of the stairs. "Bailey! Get up! I need you to clean grain bins today!" She only rolled over. Maybe he would leave her alone or think she wasn't home yet. "Bailey! Get your ass up! And NOW God damnit!" She lifted her head and squinted against the bright sunlight and looked through blurry eyes at her clock. "Eight! God!" she groaned. She lay still for a few minutes and was dozing off again when her father began to come up the stairs. "Bailey Rose! Now! I need those bins clean!" He picked up her work jeans from yesterday and threw them at her. She rolled over in a rage. "Alright! I'm up!" she screamed. "Don't yell at me young lady! It's not my fault that you didn't get home until five. You barely beat the sun for Christ's sake! And it's not my fault your friends have to spin their tires all the time and wake me up! If you're gonna be late, I'd think you'd have enough sense to be quiet about it and at least sneak in the house!" Bailey didn't look up and just bent over to grab her dirty t-shirt from the day before. Her dad left and she dropped to her knees. "My fuckin' head," she muttered, pressing her hands against her forehead as if it would go away. She got up, went to her desk drawer, grabbed five ibuprofens and swallowed them. "That'll hopefully take care of it." But as she pulled her jeans and t-shirt on, the humidity crept into her lungs and her face went pale. "Fuck," she muttered. She went to the bathroom and splashed cold water on her face as her dad threw her work gloves on the floor of the entry-way. She pulled her dishwasher-blond hair into a ponytail, pulled her work boots on, grabbed a dust mask and her gloves, and walked out to the red and maroon Ford. She and her father sat in silence as they drove to the bins. When they reached them, she just climbed out and walked to the back to get the buckets and shovels. "You only need one shovel. I won't be helping you. I've got other things to do."

"Fine." She grabbed her shovel and headed to the bins. Right away the smell of rotten grain hit her hard and she could hear the skittering mice in the bins. She held her breath as her stomach churned. "Rotten grain," she thought. "How frickin' ironic." The smell of rotten grain was too much like the mixture of the tastes of the cheap beer and Jack Daniels they drank last night. She got in the bin and began mashing the mice beneath her shovel and scooped them up with the rotten grain as her dad drove away. Her stomach turned over and over, but she wouldn't puke, she wouldn't give her dad the satisfaction. She continued squashing the mice and shoveling. "Why can't he just get a damn cat to take care of these bastards!" she screamed in her frustration. "Who cares if he hates cats!" She continued scooping, but as the temperature rose, she began sweating and all the smells became stronger. She held her breath and stopped for a second. "Oh God!" she muttered and clamored out of the bin and ran to the edge of a tree row and fell to her knees.

She heard the pickup rumble up as she kneeled there and spit. "Great," she muttered. Her dad walked up to her and rubbed her back. "C'mon, you can finish this tomorrow. It'll be overcast and might rain so it won't be so hot. The lentils aren't ready quite yet anyway, so we have time. Especially if it rains." Bailey stood up slowly and walked to the pickup with her dad. He dumped what she had scooped in the longer grass, downwind. She sat in the pickup, leaning her head against the door frame as he got in and the drove down the road. Her dad began whistling as he swayed his head back and forth looking at his crops as they drove along. Bailey only looked at the culvert where she hid the remainder of her beer and Jack Daniels just a few hours ago. She began singing along to the song with her dad. She'd be back to the culvert later on tonight.



*Heather Tysse*

Steffany Ward

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*The Impact of Disease  
on the Hawaiian Islands*

The state of Hawaii as it is today differs much from the Hawaii that existed just a few centuries ago. Before the coming and influence of Westerners and foreigners, Hawaii was a true paradise for the natives that dwelt there. While Hawaii is still viewed as the islands of paradise, these islands and the people and culture they hold have been greatly altered by influences from the Western and European world. One factor, and perhaps the ultimate cause of change in Hawaii, has been disease. With the coming of foreigners came diseases to which the native Hawaiians had no immunity, and thus illness wiped out the majority of the islands' populations. This drastic decrease in population opened up the door for outside influences to come into Hawaii and as a result, reshape its culture, religion, and government, providing for the eventual annexation of the islands by the United States.

In native Hawaii, natives lived in peace and communion with each other. "Before the coming of foreigners one gave and one took, the poor were never left hungry or without a roof, even one's enemy, should he come to the door, was sent away laden with gifts." Nudity was considered acceptable, and people lived simple lives in grass huts. Native Hawaiians also had great fear and reverence for their gods and the property of their chiefs. The word "tabu" referred to the sanctity of the property of the chiefs and the temples. This word carried behind it fearful connotations of punishment causing the people to "not so much as breathe upon anything belonging to nobility."

On January 18, 1778, two ships, the *Resolution* and *Discovery*, commanded by Captain James Cook, arrived on one of the Hawaiian islands. The inhabitants of the island believed Cook was their god Lono returning at last from the hidden lands of Kahiki with gifts for them. The people paraded him around the temples and prepared sacrifices and feasts for him. Captain Cook did not know of the tabu system and tried bartering with hatchets for the idols of the temple to be used as fuel. Eventually he declared, "I am not sacred; but I demand all that you have to give." With this and other defilement of the temples and the realization that this man was not Lono, tensions among the natives and Cook's crew grew. As the result of a fight on the island, Captain Cook was slain, and the sailors, after burn-

ing villages and killing natives, eventually sailed off for good.

When Captain Cook arrived in Hawaii, the population of the islands was somewhere between 250,000 and one million inhabitants. With the coming of the Westerners, Hawaii could no longer exist as the isolated islands it had been, and the door for trade and disease was opened. Diseases such as smallpox, measles, influenza, and colds made their debut on the islands. Because the natives had never had contact with these diseases, and thus had no immunity to them, illness was often fatal, and epidemics were devastating to the native population. By 1848, the population of native Hawaiians had declined to only 40,000-88,000 people. Such a drastic and sudden decrease in population had a resounding impact upon the islands. Like Europe after the devastation of the Black Plague, Hawaii lost much of its culture. At this time in Hawaii, there was no written language, so all chants, ceremonies, and traditions had to be passed down by word of mouth. Because the older generation was no longer around to teach hula, pre-contact Hawaiian history, herbal medicinal practices, and ceremonies to the younger people, much of traditional culture was buried along with the victims of disease.

In 1853, smallpox first arrived in Honolulu. Aboard the American ship the *Charles Mallory*, which stopped at Honolulu on its way to San Francisco, the first case of smallpox appeared. Immediate action was taken, and physicians of Honolulu offered to inoculate all of the Hawaiians on Oahu for a fee to be paid by the government. However, Dr. Judd, a missionary involved in the government, refused the offer and instead began trying to produce a vaccine. Within a few weeks it seemed that the worst was over; however, within a few months, smallpox recurred, possibly through infected clothes that were sold to the natives. Hospitals were crudely established, but the natives did not cooperate with local physicians and hundreds lost their lives.

By 1865, leprosy was becoming a problem in Hawaii and was scaring the people. In order to curb their fears of the disease, a lepers' colony was established at the base of the northern cliffs of Molokai, the remotest part of the island. The establishment of this colony in Hawaii paralleled the practice of isolating lepers outside of the camp in Biblical times. Since access to the area was possible only by sea or a very sure-footed donkey, those sentenced to the colony were not able to pass along their family traditions and stories to their children and grandchildren. In 1873, Father Damien went to the lepers of Molokai, and the conditions he found when he arrived there were appalling. "Young girls in whom leprosy had just been discovered were attacked by demon-faced men in final decay. Lepers threw other lepers out of huts to die. The island's huts were foul with disease and despair. Most of the poor lepers reeked of decaying flesh." Damien spent sixteen years on the island converting lost and dying souls to Christ and turning the colony into a civilized place where the dying and dead received

proper care and burial. He eventually sacrificed his own life for the lepers of Hawaii, dying of leprosy himself. Leprosy is seen as one of the most destructive forces that depopulated the native population of Hawaii.

With disease ravaging the islands, royalty needed to try to save the islands and the little culture that was left. However, the kings and leaders saw that the natives were dying off while the foreign merchants and sailors were surviving the illnesses. From these observations, they inferred that the ways of the Westerners must be superior to those of the Hawaiians and thus began changing their kingdom to be more like America and Western Europe. Kamehameha I allowed free trade with foreigners to happen and was accepting of their trade goods of muskets and nails, but he did not allow foreigners to have any part in the politics of his kingdom. The rulers believed that disease had come to the islands as punishment, and they realized that their gods were not intervening to save them. Kamehameha II, who eventually died of the measles, is responsible for destroying the idol worship, tabu system, and traditional religion of Hawaii.

Idol worship having been abolished, the door was wide open for missionaries to begin converting the natives to their religion and culture. When missionaries first landed on the islands, they found a people running around naked and dwelling in grass huts. To Western civilization this was an unacceptable way of living, so the missionaries began measures to make Hawaii a more civilized place. They began by erecting a chapel and school and had the king and chiefs and their families as their first students. The missionaries are also credited with giving the Hawaiians a written alphabet.

Native culture was further suppressed by the rules of the missionaries, which outlawed hula and Hawaiian chants. Also dancing and horseback riding were forbidden on the Sabbath, and inter-racial marriages were condemned. Hawaiians also attempted to return to their herbal medicinal practices when they saw that the missionary priests could not perform miracles of healing, but the missionaries banned these practices in order to protect their interests in converting the natives to Christianity. Within a few years of landing on the islands, the missionaries had transformed Hawaii completely. "[A] race of naked savages had become a people who wore the clothing of civilization, recognized the institution of Christian marriage, had reformed their licentious habits, and had dotted every hillside throughout the Islands with churches, schoolhouses, and comfortable dwellings."

As foreigners continued to come to Hawaii for trade, sandalwood trees, and other purposes, the face of Hawaii continued to change. While the Hawaiians of old saw that Westerners were superior in fighting disease, younger generations began to believe that Westerners held all the power and money also. Natives wanting the power and success of Caucasians shunned their Hawaiian heritage. People were no longer proud to be Hawaiian and newborn children were given common English names instead of traditional Hawaiian names full of cultural importance.

As the years passed, foreigners were given more room to influence the islands. Under Kamehameha III, the concept of land ownership was changed from the common land usage laws of old. Foreigners were now permitted to buy land and private estates were established. By 1893, foreigners controlled ninety percent of the land. Kamehameha IV established Queen's Hospital to care for all of the sick and dying Hawaiians, and he himself died of chronic bouts of asthma having ruled for only nine years. The last royal ruler of Hawaii, Queen Liliuokalani, tried to establish a new constitution that preserved the islands' sovereignty and empowered the throne and the native Hawaiians. She was, however, deposed in 1894 by the efforts of the American minister in Hawaii with American military support. Efforts to reclaim her throne were futile, and in 1898, the United States annexed Hawaii against the advice of their own advisors. In 1959, Hawaii became the fiftieth state.

As a result of the devastation caused by disease in the islands of Hawaii, there are only 8,000 pureblooded Hawaiians alive today, and the majority of the rest of the inhabitants have less than fifty percent of pure Hawaiian blood in them. Disease is seen as the principal means by which the culture and native population of Hawaii was lost. While interaction with foreigners was inevitable, it may be fantasized that had the islands been left untouched, the inhabitants would be dwelling in a paradise essentially free of disease-causing microbes.

## Derek Swenson

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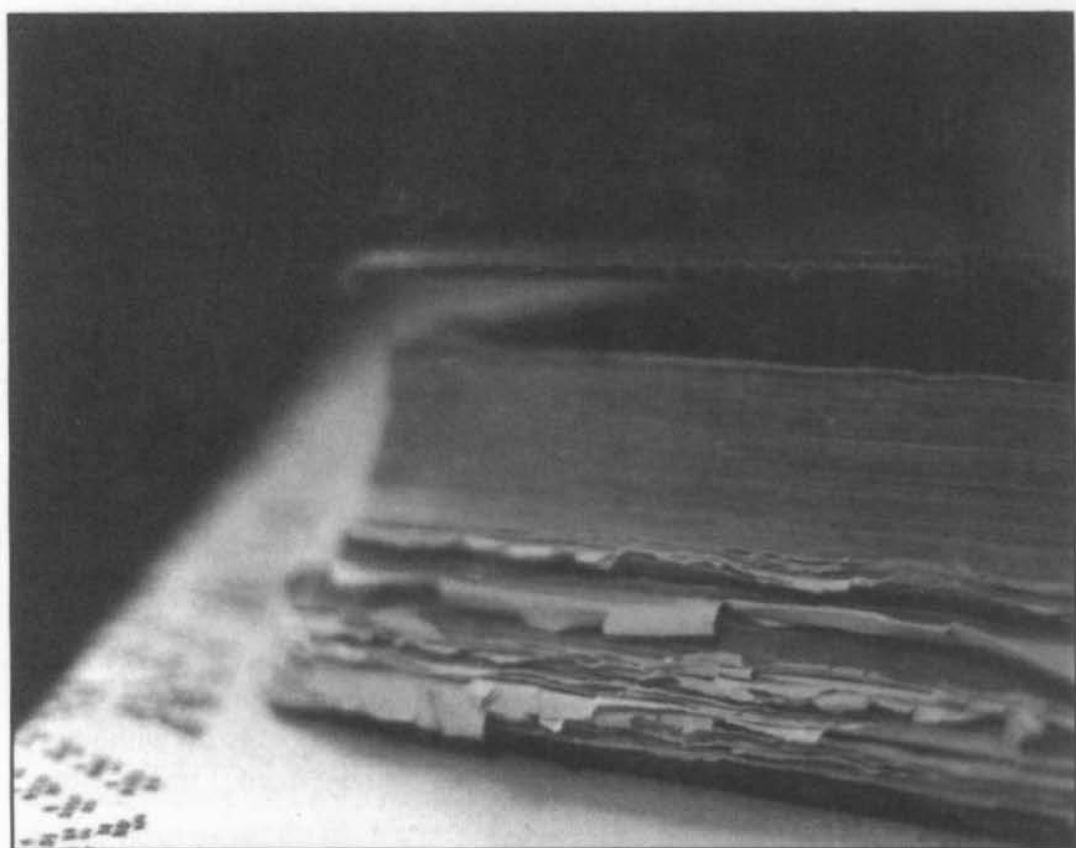
### *Bloom*

When the captain purchased his first ship  
And when the adventurer mounted his first horse  
I was still in preschool  
Clutching a stubby pencil  
Carefully tracing the lines of the alphabet

While they conquered white-tipped waves  
And crossed plains barren and fertile  
I labored over the symmetrical curls of S  
And perfected G's inward hook  
And while my comrades discovered new regions  
And accomplished great things  
And made their names known across whole continents  
I learned how to write mine

Yet still my friends would smile at me with confidence  
For though their reputation surpassed my humble understanding  
They knew that soon we would be together again  
Conspiring a literary genesis





*Heather Tysse*

Laura Rabenberg

---

*Red Iron Lake Longing*

Groggily I peer out from the back seat. All I can see is black, but I know I'll see them soon. Just as I'm about to drift off to sleep again, they appear out of the dark. The "No Passing" signs heighten my anticipation, and I know that it's only an hour to the lake.

David is still asleep next to me. His head is resting on the barricade, which was placed between us much earlier in the trip. The stack of blankets, pillows, and books has been pushed slightly farther onto my side of the back seat, so I shove it a little. David sighs and repositions his head, but does not wake up. Mom eyes me suspiciously, but all the while continues her "Fire and Rain" duet with James Taylor.

I turn back to the window and can almost make out the silhouettes of creatures dancing in and out of the shadows cast by huge groves of trees. We near a small lake and I know we can't be more than a handful of oldies from the cabin. As I struggle to sit still in my seat, I remember my last trip to the lake. It was last summer and I can only hope that this trip will be just as eventful. I envision the cabin and the lake, exactly as they have been summer after summer. I find myself wishing and hoping that nothing has changed, except for the snakes. I could probably do without so many snakes this year. As we drive further into the night, I imagine the days ahead of me...

We turn onto the gravel road, and I begin to see the cabins. Some are dark, and others shine with light from inside. Grandpa and Grandma are waiting for me, and they rap loudly on my window as my family excitedly waves their greetings. As I jump out I'm enveloped in a monstrous hug, which hasn't changed, since I still feel as if Grandpa might squeeze so tightly that I won't be able to breathe. I squirm out of his massive arms and am immediately greeted with familiarity. I slowly make my way out onto the dock, along the way looking for the familiar frogs and acorns that signal summer's arrival, as well as my own. The waves meeting the dock produce a gentle lapping sound, and the trees whistle with the soothing evening breeze. Frogs and crickets add their voices to the occasional splash of a trout, creating silver shimmers on the placid water.

As I enter the enclosed porch, it is alive with a slight current of swirling air and dust. I run through the kitchen and open living room and

up the wooden stairs. As I make my way upstairs for the night, I stop to touch the ceiling. I smile and know I've grown because last year I had to be one step lower to be able to reach! Even though I'm a year older and a step taller, the cabin and the lake haven't changed.

They'll always be the same in my mind, no matter how old or tall I am.

I awake to the smell of cinnamon rolls and roll over to look out the huge triangular window. I'm nearly blinded by the sun's reflections off of the deep-blue water, but I can still manage to make out the island and several pelicans on the moss-covered rocks close by.

Grandpa shows up for breakfast, and we prepare to spend the day fishing. He and Dad prepare the lures, rods and reels, and the boat. Grandpa's boat is the source of seemingly endless frustration, but finally the motor starts and we are ready to go on our adventure. We head off across the lake and past the island until we're out of view of the cabins. It's completely still, and I recognize the stillness. I've yet to find it anywhere else.

After an hour I'm tired of listening to fishing stories, but I know they'll continue on for hours. Grandpa tells of building the cabin in one summer and how at that time there were no other buildings on the lake. I can tell that he sometimes longs to go back to those earlier days, the days when he and Grandma spent weekends and summers at the cabin. My father, along with four brothers, drank up the cabin experience when he was young, just as I am, resting my feet on the side of the boat while I listen to their stories.

After what seems like an eternity, they decide it is time to head back to the cabin for lunch. Grandpa maneuvers the boat, and Dad grabs onto the dock as we approach the familiar shore. The dock has seen its finer days and is in obvious need of some repair. The undersides of the boards are covered in a slimy green moss which has grown up between some of the cracked planks. If I try to walk straight down the dock without making any noise, I can never do it! It's impossible. The third board from the end has a mysterious section, about a square foot, missing, and two other planks will dump you right into the shallow water if you stray too far from the middle. Almost every other board creaks and threatens to send you flailing into the chilly lake.

Even though it's July, the water is cool to the touch. I hop onto the dock and remove my lifejacket, shoes, and socks. I've got my swimming suit on underneath, but it's not warm enough to swim yet. The sun overhead peeks out from behind its cloudy disguise and promises some swimming time later in the afternoon. I play around the big hollow tree that is on the shore and search for frogs. As soon as I am about to catch one, it jumps into the water and swims away from me. As I watch the frog make its getaway, I notice a small school of minnows swirling around the edge of the dock. They too escape as they hear me approaching and dart

into the shadows underneath the old dock.

I can still feel faint traces of dew on the grass. Then I remember the storm last night. I could hear and smell the storm before I had a chance to see it through the big window. I awoke to thunder in the night and have to admit I was a little scared, although it seems almost funny in the daylight. When the lightning flashed, it illuminated the sky, and I could see the waves rolling across the lake. They were grayish black and menacing. I heard the water pounding at the shore and the rain drumming on the roof. The rain at home never sounds or feels as soothing as it does at the cabin. In fact, nothing really does.

I snap back to the lake and run inside to find Grandma and Mom fixing lunch. We always eat out on the deck so that we can watch the lake, and every time it shows us something different. Since our cabin is on the point, we have the best view. Our cabin is surrounded on two sides by the lake, instead of just one, like everyone else's cabin is.

David and I set out for the island after dinner. We take the duck boat and paddle quickly away from Grandma's watchful gaze. The wind has picked up a little, making it hard for us to reach the island's shore. After ten minutes of extremely tiring paddling, we arrive. The island's side closest to the cabin is C-shaped and protected from the waves common on the bigger water. At the north edge we stop to examine some dark weeds we can see through the water. It's shallow here, maybe three feet or so. The grass-like weeds have grown up to the top of the water and form a sort of mat on top. It's really difficult to get the boat through the weed mats, but we stick our paddles down into the soft brown mud and push ourselves off.

On the island lies a big old oak tree that has fallen over into the water, forming an arch. We carefully paddle and manage to glide underneath the archway. We finish our annual tour of the island and head back across the lake.

I wade along the shoreline again, looking for shells and frogs. I find a skeleton, and Dad tells me it's a crayfish. It looks like a kind of scorpion, but I don't see any stinger on it. I set it on the dock, planning to take it inside to show Mom and Grandma. They are impressed with my find but tell me to take it back outside because crayfish don't belong next to the potato salad. Grandma's potato salad doesn't compare to any other; it's perfect, except that she likes too many onions in it.

I'm assigned the job of getting everybody rounded up for dinner. As I jump off the swivel-chair it squeaks and returns to its original position facing the island counter. I skip down to the water, and Grandpa swings me around twice before letting me back down. He says he's so strong because he was in the Army. Later as he takes off his fishing shirt, I'll try to catch a glimpse of the huge cat tattooed on his wrinkled arm.

After we finish dinner, we light a campfire and fish off of the dock. When the fire has burned down, Grandpa and Grandma head back into

town. They look tired, and I guess they're ready for bed. Pretty soon it'll be time for me to climb the stairs up to the funny orange and yellow flowered sheets...

I realize I've been staring blankly ahead for quite some time. I anxiously turn to peer over my left shoulder and wait for the emission of Boot Hill into my view. After the Beatles have gotten halfway through "Can't Buy Me Love," it appears. I snap back to my window and spot the tattered wooden sign announcing our arrival at Red Iron Lake.

After maneuvering the car over countless potholes, we eventually reach the end of the point and the cabin. I sit motionless for a moment to soak up all of the love and warmth radiating from this extraordinary place, even though the local forecaster attempting to break through the black and white fuzz on the cabin's television set would describe the night as anything but "warm and radiating."

Despite the fact that it is April, I feel immediately warmed and comforted by the cabin's familiarity and overwhelming sense of "right"; when I'm at the cabin nothing ever seems wrong with the world, and my worries seem to almost vaporize and sail out through the huge window overlooking the lake. The lake seems to somehow defy time and encompasses a world within itself. The lake and cabin wholly captivate me and never fail to alleviate my troubles. The chilly breeze permeates my fleece jacket as I stoop to take a seat on the edge of the aging dock. Even though the water is still partially covered in a sheet of ice, I close my eyes and I'm right back in the duck boat. As I remember paddling across the gentle waves, floating under the overhanging tree, and stopping to explore the island, I'm reminded of those trips which were always sure to be filled with discovery and adventure.

The porch is cluttered with old fishing equipment, yet oddly still smells inviting. The aroma of old dusty fishing equipment intertwines with the fresh scent of spring, and I am comforted again by that sense of familiarity. I continue my tour of the cabin and head up the stairs to gaze out on the lake and the huge clouds that are hurriedly passing over with some sense of urgency. They seem to be moving quickly, picking up speed as they fly, and signal a great change overhead. The view of the water is as gorgeous as ever, even as the waves pummel the unprotected side of the island.

I'm reminded of the real reason I've come to the cabin, and a slight pang of anomaly settles within me. My grandparents are selling the cabin on Red Iron Lake and need help moving their things: all of their dusty fishing poles, tiny twin beds with funny orange and yellow flowered sheets, and swivel chairs that I've come to love, even though they squeak in protest at the slightest movement. I take one last look at the tumultuous water and force myself back down the wooden stairway, stopping at the bottom. I raise my arms overhead and find that I'm finally tall enough to reach the

ceiling without the aid of any steps. That's when I realize that I've reached all I can.

The cabin has seen me through life from infancy to the beginnings of adulthood. It has taught me many lessons, but the cabin's mystical and powerful hold on me is largely a product of my family. As I carry the last box out of the porch I hold back tears, although that doesn't last for long. I can't contain them any longer and am saddened at my loss and my family's loss of this truly special place. I've yet to find any other place that makes me feel at home the way the cabin on Red Iron Lake seems to soothe my mind and soul. I can only hope that our cabin's future owners will grow to feel that special familiarity and love I have come to expect upon my arrival at the lake.

After one final hug from Grandpa, I depart knowing that I'll always love this special place. Even though I'm another year older and many steps taller, the cabin and the lake haven't changed. They'll always be the same in my mind, no matter how old or tall I am.

**Jeremy Bold**

---

***Old Woman***

**S**he bites her thumbnail  
Teeth covered by a frown that wrinkles  
Her round face  
Drained with grief, contained  
In lines under her eyes  
Glassy stars  
Twinkling in her watery memory

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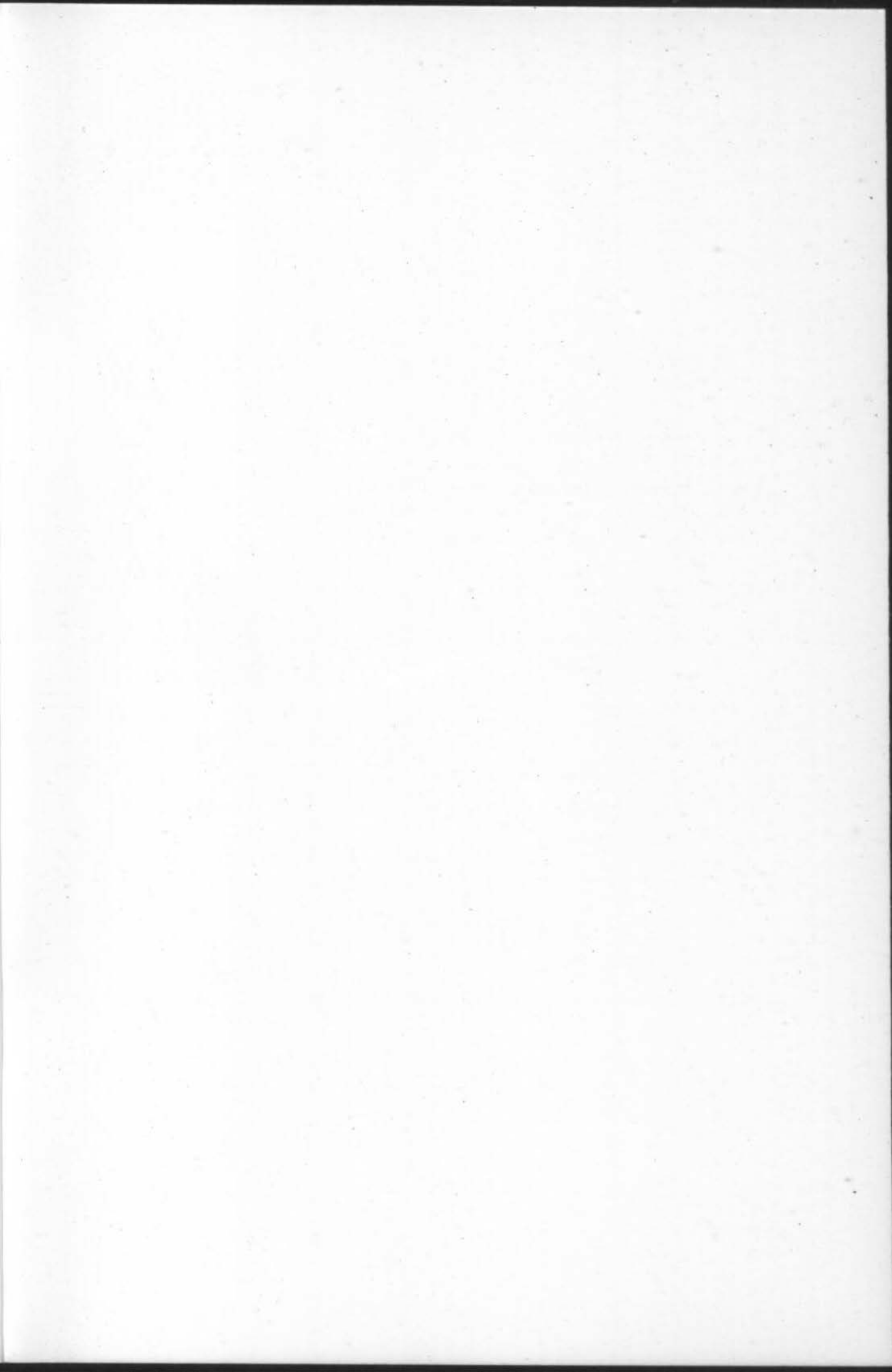
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