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Shadow smoke: A nonfiction collection on memories lost, taken, and storied

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SHADOW SMOKE: A NONFICTION COLLECTION ON MEMORIES LOST, TAKEN, AND STORIED

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APPROVAL OF THESIS

We, the faculty supervising the work of Sarah Ann Canterbury, affirm that the thesis, *Shadow Smoke: A Nonfiction Collection on Memories Lost, Taken, and Storied,* meets the high academic standards for original scholarship and creative work established by the English Department and Marshall University. This work also conforms to the editorial standards of our discipline and the Graduate College of Marshall University. With our signatures, we approve the manuscript for publication.

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ABSTRACT

Shadow Smoke investigates the neuroscientific nature of memory and memory's role/ authority in creative nonfiction as an illustration of how the genre lays the process of memory bare and accurately models the mind's process of memory. The scholarship as well as body of creative works revolve around the understanding and tension of memory being a creative process which is explored through genre discussions, neuroscientific studies, and individual creative works. *Shadow Smoke* consists of four braided nonfiction essays and five nonfiction vignettes to form a collection on memories lost, taken, and storied framed by a critically researched introduction assessing the collection's alignment and originality in the genre at large. Each of the four creative nonfiction essays imagines those traces of stories that are not really ours, but can be, and should be and the neuroscientific backing of storytelling culture. Although self-contained, all four essays are connected thematically through their overlapping themes and focuses on family, region (West Virginia), memory, memory loss, storytelling, identity, and trauma. Lyric in nature, but research driven at their core each creative nonfiction piece focuses on the process of finding, but more so understanding, how to engage with the remnants of the Appalachian region's and my family's oral traditions. As the subtitle to the collection represents the represented essays: "Remembering Sophia Jane," "Homeplace," "Stories of the Broom Sage," and the title essay, "Shadow Smoke" each grapple with the research and experience of memories lost, taken, and storied. Stories and writing are not functional. They are creative, expressive, flawed, and thankfully free from the pressure to capture exactly what happened. Free to imagine what happened and what those memories, or lack thereof, can mean.

INTRODUCTION

My fiancé is a sculptor, and he has been teaching me the distinctions and intricacies of working with clay. He told me on the phone one night that "clay remembers where you touched it." I froze, asking, "What do you mean clay remembers?" He explained that when molding, or throwing, clay at the wheel, the spinning motion pulses through the clay and it remembers each pull and point of contact. This memory of motion is part of clay's plasticity, but somehow it seems more mystical and mysterious than just that, at least to me. As the potter throws at the wheel, clay, if directed unevenly, if pulled against itself, regardless of how sturdy it appears when dried, has a memory of motion and direction. It remembers. Clay, an inanimate object, remembers, not knowing how or why. If we are honest, that is true of us, too.

Like clay, our memories are created, and though formed so differently from each other, they are all intrinsically formed of the same materials from which clay is created.

Like clay, memories are constructed of patterns and movements unseen and untraced – physically expressed in a work of art that shares only a facet of something a story expounds on.

Like clay, memories can be broken, misunderstood, and deemed more beautiful, true, or worthy based nothing on what is inside.

But memory is also unlike clay, unlike pottery, because if clay shatters in the kiln's fire it is "ruined." A bowl with a crack is unfit for use. There might be a potter who holds on regardless, or an artist who might use the shards of clay to make something new, but brokenness is always a flaw. Memory embraces the gaps and story requires them. Cracks and fissures may ruin a bowl but not an essay.

My thesis collection, *Shadow Smoke*, is my prose equivalent to the memory of clay; consisting of four essays and five vignettes purposely shaped to explore various aspects of memory's nature. And though each story has been shaped and fired, the cracks and flaws will, I hope, become what holds it together. Because it is into those gaps where I enter. Where I am formed by acknowledging, researching, and embracing the creative process of memory science narrates the story created between what we believe to remember and the reality that we can never fully know how or why we remember at all. Though self-contained, each essay in the collection is linked by the tension of permanence and impermanence as I continuously grapple with what I do not want to forget or cannot seem to forget. But any writer, any person, has to wrestle with the tension of memory, as the present is elusive, and while the future can be dreamed about and imagined, it is inherently shaped by our past; thus, memory sculpts our present, future, and past as it is created and imaginatively reshaped with each narrative retelling.

Even with all that has been researched and discovered about memory and the writing process, the expression of memory as story, though shaped by the writer, still moves on its own— intentionally and inexplicably shaped by the paradox of human memory. This paradox of human memory created by the overlap between memory recall and imagination outlines the major memory themes or divisions this creative collection explores of memories lost, taken, and storied. The memory themes explored also appear as the collection's subtitle: "A Nonfiction Collection on Memories Lost, Taken, and Storied" as realities and questions about the nature of

these memories prompted the creative expression and researched link that joins the four self-contained essays together thematically.[1]

Memories "Lost" relates both to the reality of normal memory loss or fading, as well as the difficulty—scientifically and emotionally—of abnormal memory degeneration experienced through diseases such as Alzheimer's disease. All memories deal with loss. Even in long-term memories and core memories, the illusion and characteristics of memory "permanence" only exists because of the reality of impermanence, but, the tension of memory loss as a motivator or theme of narrative was personally prompted because of my discomfort that my own beloved memories (in connection and containing people I love) could be altered as time and circumstances change.

Memories "Taken" relates to statements made by nonfiction authors Brenda Miller and Suzanne Paola that I initially resisted and will explore at length throughout the introduction: that "it is not important what I remember— or even the factual accuracy of the scene—but why I recall it the way I do," in that by admitting the inescapable component of creation as a part of the memory process, we can narrate and imagine realities of what we have forgotten, believe to remember, and hope to remember (6). Memories "Taken" as a thread throughout the collection specifically correlates to interconnections of memory and trauma, or the reality and role of historical memories to my present perspective (i.e., an uncanny reality between memories which

[1] "Remembering Sophia Jane," "Homeplace," "Stories of the Broom Sage," and "Shadow Smoke" (the essay).

are not mine yet belong to me).[2] Since the fear of memories being "lost" and of memory loss prompts creation, whether through narration of personal memories or exploration of the memories of others, both realities are a means to take memories already subject to loss.

Memories "Storied" does not only relate to memories being narrated, although each essay includes memory scenes, but it also serves as a thread that explores the process, nature, and purpose of storytelling to memories both lost and taken. To story is contingent on what we believe to have happened and the exploration of why and how.

Story is the means for each essay to explore self and others.

Story is the means for the mind to both reshape and hold onto details of our lives and relationships.

Story is the means to protect, to create, to revive.

Memory is central to how we operate, as memory is the gateway to our past, as well as the means for imagining the future. That is the root of Shadow Smoke.

My interest in exploring the neuroscientific side of the creative memory process began with an interest in Alzheimer's research. My writing was very much motivated by the fear that my perception of those I loved may, over time, begin to fray or fade, much like the memories of my Grandma Jane as she succumbed to the debilitating effects of Alzheimer's disease. Beginning with abnormal memory loss research, I learned not only about the degenerative path of

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[2] If the word appropriate had not developed such negative connotations, its denotation would apply to the concept of memories "taken," as loss prompts creation which generates created (therefore appropriated) memories.

Alzheimer's but was also confronted by the blur of truth and creation in even normally functioning memory processes. Logically, I knew the mind and memory processes still had degrees of mystery to them, otherwise diseases like Alzheimer's could be treated if not cured, but I did not expect to also learn that the creation process of memory is crucial for a healthy mind to operate. Despite all the questions remaining in the field of neuroscience, the field has a long history and rapidly evolving understanding of memory processes and neurological patterns. By examining the patterns of the brain, its specific regions, and its interrelated systems, the intricate subject of memory can be better understood and connected to its relation and role in storytelling.

The role and process of storytelling was precisely where my interest in neuroscientific evidence regarding the creative process of memory intersected with what I believed about the genre of creative nonfiction. Many individuals, including myself originally, saw the creative nature of the memory process, and especially the narration of memories in genres like creative nonfiction to be riddled with gaps, errors, fabricated projections, and even lies. Creative nonfiction has been misunderstood and represented as *creative* fabrications of real people and moments; however, in the gaps neuroscience reveals about the accuracy, process, recall, and purpose of what we remember, art is able to leap and memory is able to morph. Both in creative nonfiction and the scientific research field, studies and essays often miss the interconnections between the facets of memory they explore with other truths of memory's nature.[3] It is not just

[3] I understand that memory is so complex a process that scientific studies more narrowly focus on a specific region and/or facet of memory in order to appropriately study said facet. I am not suggesting researchers studying the

that memory processes are reflective of storytelling. Memory is a creative process and storytelling is a snapshot of our memories in that moment which, like our brains, wrap emotion, details, bias, and place together to create a version of what happened. The storytelling process mirrors the memory process as the act of storytelling feeds and affects memory, but story also *mirrors* memory.

"To story" requires degrees of creation, but through that creation—through story— the root of our memories is solidified. Memory, like a story, is a montage of senses, moments, and feelings. I find it crucial to note my specific understanding of the process of "storytelling" or "to story" verses "to narrate." While these words technically may be interchangeable, the specific use of the word "story" in this collection and research is linked to how I understand the expression of memory to operate in the genre of creative nonfiction and to what purpose.[4] The intentional use of "to story" is also regionally significant, which will be discussed later in the coming section on memory and nonfiction. The act of narration requires a degree of separation from the people, ideas, scene, and emotional pull of a story: a retelling of events, conversations, and timelines with no direct reflective or metaphorical exploration of the memories which are

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protein enzymes relating to Alzheimer's Disease, for example, take time to note the interconnected feature of memory loss within the larger creative expression of memory. However, because I am not a memory researcher but a creative writer who has studied memory, I believe these interconnections can be profitable in our perception of memory, even though this study will not advance the technical realities of neuroscience.

[4] This will be explored in greater detail, and in specific connections to the genre of creative nonfiction, in the following section on the role of memory in creative nonfiction.

narrated.[5] However, "to story" is to take those details of narration and place one's self in the heart of reflection, metaphor, and the greater scope of literary style and technique convention to tell not only what we believe to have happened but to suppose why those memories matter to us. Furthermore, to story is to attempt to discover why we remember what we do and what our memories reveal about our personal being and those places or peoples around us.

NONFICTION AND MEMORY

Creative nonfiction, even in its naming, establishes a tension between truth and creation. In my first creative writing textbook, *The Practice of Creative Writing*, I read that "creative nonfiction is always about the real, true, known world. However, it specifically refers to a kind of creative writing that uses the conventions of fiction in order to tell a true story" and wondered about the "line" between story and memory (34). Phillip Lopate, arguably the most influential nonfiction writer and personal essayist of the twenty-first century, discusses his preference for the term "literary nonfiction" to "creative" as literary nonfiction "embeds the work in a tradition and a lineage. Instead of implying this [nonfiction] is something new" ("Interview by Laura Knight"). Lopate expands on his dislike of the "creative" tag of nonfiction and the definition of it as "nonfiction that reads like fiction" by asking, "why can't nonfiction be nonfiction?"[6] He

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[5] To narrate to me personally, this discussion of narration is not reflective to the whole of creative writers or to the etymology of the word narrate, story, or storytelling.

[6] Lopate discussed the naming of the genre in a 2008 interview by Laura Knight published online by *Poets and Writers*.

respectfully acknowledges the "guidelines" of contemporary creative nonfiction but fervently defends the history of the genre remarking that he is "more interested in the display of consciousness on the page" than a genre formed from or off of fiction ("Interview by Laura Knight"). The issues Lopate articulates about creative nonfiction being misrepresented as new and/or dependent on fiction are important factors to acknowledge in order to understand the genre and its history of tension; however, the tension factors are not what I find most problematic. The exploration of memory in the genre intensifies the trepidation from writers within and readers outside the genre. However conscious and honest a nonfiction writer might be, they still write one perception of a recalled memory which itself is constructed, and so barring the discussion of what conventions establish nonfiction, the expression of memory and the line of reality is the crux of the genre's tension.

My perception that this balance and line in creative nonfiction was maintained and demarcated by "the real, true, known world" in a fiction-style true narrative was further challenged by authors like Brenda Miller and Suzanne Paola in *Tell it Slant,* who called memory, *"*the ultimate mythmaker, continually seeking meaning in the random and often unfathomable events of our lives," noting the crucial understanding of memory as liminal because of its constructed nature (4). I was confused and troubled by their admission that creative nonfiction involved a "creative interpretation of the facts of our lives," that memory is "confronted with imagination" and that this boundary between imagination, memory, and lying was to be "negotiated" by each writer (154). Writing about the genre, Miller and Paola highlight the complex relationship creative nonfiction has with this concept, storytelling methods, and balance of memory, explaining how it is "not important what I remember— or even the factual accuracy

of the scene—but why I recall it the way I do" (6). Creative nonfiction attempts to retell truths; truths involve memory, which is a creative process, and thus, what cannot be remembered accurately does not draw an end to the work. The gaps in what we fail to remember and in what we want to remember opens up moments of reflection about ourselves and our memories. Creative nonfiction's engagement with memories and self-depicts only facets of the ideas, people, and time they story, but that expression is the beauty of the genre which has, as Lopate articulates, existed for centuries as the "essayist [is] moving forward and circling back to what you said and arguing with yourself, or at least asking yourself if this is what you really think" ("Interview by Laura Knight").

In *Write Now! Nonfiction, Memoir, Journalism, and Creative Nonfiction,* Reza Aslan explores this tension between truth and memory in a way that takes the storytelling impulse into account: "Your memories are lies you've convinced yourself are true. Science has proven that every time you recall an event in your past you actively recreate that event in your brain" (123). Aslan goes on to express that memory is not actually "rewound" but reinvented and his true, albeit short, address to memory science is also reflective of the wider method and conversation the genre has about and with memory. Yes, Aslan is apt to note how the reality of memory science and creative practice is not the downfall of the genre but rather a "good thing, because what matters most in good writing […] is not always what do you remember." Rather, a more comprehensive, or a more reflective application of the nature of memory confronts Aslan's "lies" rhetoric (123). The memories "you've convinced yourself are true" are not "lies," because the nature of memory is not a pattern of recall but reinvention at its fundamental and far reaching operational neurological patterns (Aslan 123).

While this "lie" or "truth balance" rhetoric in the study of nonfiction is helpful, it does not resolve the ethical dilemmas of memory expression in the genre. There is a line between invention, re-invention, and deliberate falsification that needs to be separated from the attribution of nonfiction as creative. Miller and Paola highlight this well as they explore examples where the line between "lying" has been blurred in some cases too far or erased altogether, before discussing the role of "perhapsing" in the creative truth-telling process. Paola and Miller mention *Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood*, a narrative by Binjamin Wilkomirski, in which the author describes his childhood as a Holocaust survivor. The narrative was later proven to be fraudulent as Wilkomirski never spent any time in a concentration camp. The creative liberties Wilkomirski took in the narration of his life clearly crossed the line of what creative entails in creative nonfiction, but what even the discussion of his narrative illustrates is the undefined nature of memory creation in the genre. Paola and Miller expand on this reality also as they consider "lies" told for creative effect or metaphorical purposes that either serve a narrative function as a means of getting at the truth or that openly ask us to question the nature of truth and identity. Examples include Annie Dillard who famously created a fictional cat in *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* and Lauren Slater, who, in *Lying: A Metaphorical Memoir* admits up front to being a compulsive liar but who maintains credibility with the use of cues and reflection (156-9). Slater is telling the larger falsehoods, but she is being direct with the reader about it, while Dillard creates a falsehood and does not indicate to the reader that she is doing so. Neither are acts of misremembering nor reinvention, but rather invention, and while both are toying with the boundaries of invention, their invention is reflective of realities of themselves as tellers, which is its own narration of truth distinct from fiction.

This balancing act between creation and nonfictional storytelling is one authors blur with differing of techniques and levels of success. Harry Crews, for example, in *A Childhood: The Biography of a Place*, plays with these lines beginning his narrative with the statement that, "my first memory is of a time ten years before I was born, and the memory takes place where I have never been and involves my daddy whom I never knew" (3). Crews throughout *A Childhood* engages in a form of "perhapsing" which signals to readers the creation of memories as a means of exploring what significance the creation itself has to the teller's identity formation. When Crews writes that "they are true because I think they are true" he changes the conditions of his contract with the reader by admitting to fabrication but indicating that this fabrication is essential to the truth of who he is (5). That is, the fabrication is still truth even though the memories are not his own; they serve as a window into his imaginative life. Crews identifies the process of making memories that are not his true and places creation alongside the truth of his own story, which is reflective of the neuroscientific understanding of memory processes. Crews articulates an important characteristic about stories and memories being reflective of each other, but stories are not just composed of memories. Memories are stories. Therefore, the reality and careful balance creative nonfiction authors must walk between imagination and memory is not a fault in rhetoric but one of the rhetorical conditions of the genre that each author must negotiate with the reader. The negotiation between memory and imagination is a tradition I am continuing in my work. Just as Crews explores memory creation differently from authors like Dillard or Slater, so too does my collection explore personal and researched facets of the memory creation.

My discussion and understanding of "to story" is similar, although not interchangeable, with the long standing nonfiction technique, or verb to "essai." To essai, as Lopate, Miller,

Paloa, and most any nonfiction author would recognize, is linked with Michel de Montaigne's *Essays.* Montaigne's title, *Essays* created a double entendre with the French translation of the verb meaning "to try," and has served as a sort of credo for nonfiction authors since the sixteenth century (Miller Paola 93).[7] While authors like Lopate specifically, whose work has linked him to Montaigne's ideals, see the representation of to "essai" as the heart of the genre and crux of the personal essay, essai's separation to the discussion of memory alienates the originality of the genre and its parallels to neurological memory processes.[8] As I will discuss later in the introduction, the process of memory involves story neurobiologically, making "to story" reflective of memory itself while also encompassing the rationale behind essai's meaning of trying. Equally as significant to note, however, is unpacking and using the term "to story" also has a geographical significance and weight which to essai does not fully emphasize.

As an Appalachian writer with a geographically Appalachian education, the regional significance of "story" is crucial to my understanding of narrative memory expression, and to the larger region's perception of creative nonfiction. It is not that regions outside of Appalachia or the Southern United States do not value or historically engage with storytelling; it is instead that the term of storytelling to this geographic location encompasses features beyond fiction

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[7] I am not ignorant to the depth of discussions in conjunction to Montaigne's "essai" which has come to signify much more than simply "to try"; however, for this work the discussion of "to story" is central, not the history of the term or works.

[8] Lopate's discussion of the personal essay as a form of consciousness is one of the many connections to Montaigne's essai he, and many others, put forth.

conventions. West coast authors like Miller and Williams, Northern writers like Lopate, E.B White, Gutkind, and Paola correctly focus on the essayistic "attempt" necessary to the genre—to essai, but "to story" is not only focused on "the attempt" but also on the shaping, the fabricating, how the teller *constructs* the truth.[9]

This understanding of "to story" as similar to essai but rooted in the nuances of Appalachian and Southern storytelling traditions upholds the defense of the creative nonfiction Lopate puts forth as its own genre with a history and style not borrowing from fiction conventions, but shaping a true form. This tradition and distinction of "to story" from "to essai" can be seen in how Crews writes, "nothing is allowed to die in a society of storytelling people […] everything that is brought along is colored and shaped by those who bring it. If that is so, is what they bring with them true? I'm convinced it is" (6). Crews believes these stories are true not because of accuracies but because, like "to essai," "to story" leaps into the gaps. "To story" embraces that sensation of "I have never been certain of who I am" (6). To story leaps into the gaps of memory to find the "spirit of that [my] experience" (6). The nonfiction writer engages with the consciousness found in prose to essai, but does so in the larger construction of story.

In the midst of my struggle to understand the role of memory in creative nonfiction and the role of memory in constructing identity, "story" became the one "medium" that made the balancing and creation side of memory within storytelling comprehensible. Throughout the

[9] Paola, although born in Georgia, is considered to be "raised" in New Jersey, which is why she is included in the northern writers group.

nonfiction works of Terry Tempest Williams, Tera Westover, Lee Smith, Philip Lopate, Annie Dillard, and E.B White, I saw the creation process of memory and the reality of loss on full display, and it did not limit the author's narrative or make me question their motives and or their truth.[10]

In her memoir, *When Women Were Birds*, Terry Tempest Williams composes fifty-four variations of voice in response to the empty journals she inherits from her mother. Even before exploring the neuroscientific overlap of the creative nonfiction memory expression with the creative memory process, Williams explores themes of permanence and impermanence and embraces Miller and Paola's understanding of metaphorical memory not depending on factual accuracy but on the reflection on what and *why* we remember. Williams writes that, after seeing the blank journals left by her mother, the "emptiness, it translated to longing, that same hunger and thirst Mother translated to me. I will rewrite this story, create my own story on the pages of my mother's journals" (20). Here, Williams is illustrating that to "create" her own story is not a lie but rather a necessity to understand the "blank" records of her mother. Additionally, she illustrates that creation for her mother's reasoning is a necessity for herself. Williams's memoir also touches on the tension of "creation" in relationship to the exploration of truth that concerned me about the role of memory in creative nonfiction. She does this by first likening life journaling, or her mother's narration, to "mythmaking," which "is the evolutionary enterprise of

[10] And, I more specifically say the creative process of memory creatively expressed in connection to the later discussion of memories "Lost," "Taken," and "Storied," which outside work mentioned here will also be evaluated.

translating truths" (128). But what Williams (and other works in the genre) revealed to me about the nature of memory in creative nonfiction was that the drive, or the effect of story, is not and has never been about factual accuracy. This is not to say that accuracies do not matter.

In her memoir, *Dimestore: A Writer's Life*, novelist Lee Smith also creatively reaffirms the claims of Miller, Paola, and Aslan by discussing the autonomy story has in relationship to the memories and narration of "true" life. Like Williams, Smith notes the significance the art of storytelling has in establishing a permanence for memories, and also the autonomy of creation to accuracy, or factual truth itself. Smith admits the lines between perceived truth and the nature of memory to be "more complicated than I would have ever guessed as a younger woman" (168) but earlier notes that "we cannot choose our truest material. [S]ometimes we are lucky enough to find it" (74). In her use of the word "find," Lee emphasizes the act of discovery through storytelling, which also relates to the distinction of "to story" and "to essai." As such, she emphasizes the necessary process of creation in her fiction career, but with the personal expression of the people and places she loves. Story reaches though and beyond memory to attempt to "find" the truth and more importantly to story that process of trying.

If story has a function in individual discovery and identity formation, the suspension of factual accuracies is not only acceptable for the genre, but necessary for the progress of honest narration. Philip Lopate touches on this reality in a far less idealized voice than Smith by claiming that since "Montaigne, lack of knowledge has often served as the starting point for personal essays" (202). Lopate describes this "lack of knowledge," or role of creation in the personal essay, as an "interrogation" of his "misconceptions, [his] ignorance, [his] flat-earth notions," but like Smith's exploration into the voice of story, says these "ignorance's" are a

means “into sharper relief” and “deeper insights” (202). Not only is the perception of memory outside of reimagination incorrect in light of what we know about memory processes, but in a strictly narrative sense the lack of reflection on the process of memory, the process of exploring the gaps and ignorances of our own stories keeps deeper “insights” out of reach. Memory understood as a liminal and created process is the only way to have truth, because the truth of memory—of story—is that they are intrinsically created and recreated, and that meaning and truth is not defined by or accessible in what we understand as reality.

NEUROSCIENCE

The first fundamental division concerning memory is split between short-term memory and long- term memory processes. Long-term memory is the more complex memory process and is typically further divided by explicit or declarative versus implicit or nondeclarative memories.[11] Under the umbrella classification of long-term memory is the subdivision of explicit versus implicit memories. Explicit memories are further divided again into episodic and semantic memory categories. Although different from each other, episodic and semantic memory both are explicit (declarative) because “they are directly accessible to conscious recall” and can be “directly reported by an individual” (Stickgold 73). In *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates* neuroscientific researchers John Sutton and Celia Harris explain the nature and representation of

[11] I am not skipping over the discussion of short-term-memory because the memory type is simplistic, but because for the discussion of memory creation in specific connection to this collection, it is not related to the creative process of memory study.

memory, describing episodic memory as "mental time travel" and mention the episodic memory's tendency to contain the "phenomenological reliving of…past events" (Sutton, et. al. 211).[12] Nondeclarative or implicit memories involve the "how" of memory processing and although a significant facet of memory operations and science are not as related to memory creation, similar characteristics are connected with story.

In *The Memory Illusion,* Dr. Julia Shaw explores the science and the societal trends/beliefs behind remembering, forgetting, false memory, and a myriad of other memory related processes and disorders. Shaw defines semantic memory (subdivision of explicit declarative memories) as "generic memory." It "refers to the memory of meanings, concepts and facts," and she notes that semantic memory often "works alongside episodic memory" (xii). Although episodic and semantic memory systems work together, Shaw highlights the "type" of emotion linked with episodic memory: "When you remember your first day of university, your first kiss, or the vacation you took to Cancun in 2013, you are accessing your episodic memory. [I]t is our personal memory scrapbook" that is created through "reliving multisensory experiences" (xii.). These distinct subdivisions of long-term memory are in communication with each other even as they are separated by function or by the characteristics of the memory trait they process. Although I am primarily noting the research on memory processes in terms of their cognitive function, the location or anatomical regions of the brain also contribute to memory processes and neuron communication networks.

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[12] In the chapter, "Memory and Cognition."

In “Memory in Sleep and Dreams: The Construction of Meaning,” Robert Stickgold explains how “behavioral and phenomenological characteristics” of memory processes (both related to and separate from sleep characteristics) are also “differentiated by the brain systems,” or the anatomical region from where they operate (76). The medial temporal lobe of the brain, although not the exclusive anatomical region where memory operates, contains some of the most influential memory systems—including the hippocampus and amygdala. Explicit or declarative memories operate within the hippocampus, and the region is also crucial for declarative memory recall.[13] The hippocampus and amygdala often operate together to both store and reconstruct memory, weaving together both the internal and external factors which affect those memories.

What even this elementary breakdown of the types and regions of memory processes begins to reveal is a link between imagination and memory, creation and memory, and the neuroscientific research alignment to the role of memory in creative nonfiction. Sutton’s functions of memory research states that “memory is largely constructed: it is constructed from a range of sources, including what is stored and what is accessible, personal motivations, social motivations, and situational demands” (213). Memory being a constructed process is not a largely debated point throughout the neuroscience field, as the nature of creation in memory has been widely proven with a wide array of independent research exploring specific examples and effects of the nuances of memory creation. In “Memory and Imagination in Romantic Fiction,”

[13] The anatomical location of the medial temporal lobe and the hippocampus also signal the location and memory type connection between function and location.

Alan Richardson explores that reality in conversation with imagination and memory processes. He asserts that there is ever "converging data from neuropathology, cognitive developmental psychology, psychiatry, and neuroimaging" that articulates memory, and how "especially episodic memory is crucially involved in our ability to imagine" (279). But this "ability to imagine" isn't just episodic memory's role linked to imagination, it is the imaginative process of episodic memory that allows that memory to operate. Richardson and others explain that "episodic memories need to be maintained, refreshed, and periodically re-created in the mind" for a memory to have the chance of not fading (280). This discovery illustrates that creation, imagination, and narration are a part of not only memory preservation but also memory maintenance and storage.

The intersection of creation and imagination in memory was an idea that I initially resisted, but it is a reality of memory that is not only true but also one that is growing in interest and exploration both in the neuroscientific field and in popular culture. An example of this culmination of the neuroscientific trend of memory expression and creation meeting popular culture can be seen in the new Netflix documentary *The Mind Explained*. The five-episode documentary opens with "Memory, Explained" where Emma Stone narrates the viewer through broad divisions, anatomy, and characteristics of memory accompanied by insight from neuroscientists Elizabeth Phelps and Donna Addis. After categorizing facets in memories largely by the role of emotion, story, and place, both the general narration of the documentary and insight from Phelps and Addis explore the mirrored neurological patterns of imagination and memory. The documentary poses the question: "Why would we have a memory system that is so unreliable?" ("Memory, Explained" 17:05). This question was "answered" by Phelps's

conjecture that the future and past are linked in the mind. When patients monitored via scanners were asked to remember past experiences and then asked to imagine their future, the same networks for memory and imagination "lit up."

The mirrored firing pattern between imagination and memory is not the only source of evidence for the created nature of memory and therefore "truth" in storytelling. Differences between brain systems collaboratively communicating and creating "re-memories" also illustrate the role of story as memory and memory in story. In "Memory, Explained" neuroscientist Addis also examined the communication between the amygdala and hippocampus: "when we have an emotional experience, our amygdala, which actually sits right next to the hippocampus, actually regulates the hippocampus and allows it to form a more detailed and stronger memory" (7:50). Additionally, the communication between and processes of the different brain systems (or regions) relates to the significance and aspect place, emotion, and story have in the memory and imagination processes. Elizabeth Phelps, fellow neuroscientist to Addis, has written that "we think place has a particularly strong role in memory, and if you look in the hippocampus, there seems to be cells that are specifically receptive to time and place" (8:52). By tracking "place" cells in the hippocampus, alongside other memory cells, neuroscientists have been able to watch the firing patterns these different memory cells activate and, through those patterns, the strength of memory in connection to emotion, place, and story has been strengthened. This connection between memory trails relates directly to memory and imagination. As noted by Addis concerning emotion and memory and Phelps on memory and place, story also has an undeniable role and reflection on the memory process—for when story is related to memory, the process of

creation for story (involving details of place and emotion) creates "multiple ways of getting to the memory" ("Memory Explained").

To narrate a memory does not mean to just recreate a version of memory for that present moment, but suggests instead that memory knits itself together through narration, reconstructs emotion, place, and details of the memory stored in various regions of the brain.[14] Additionally, since long-term memories are subdivided between facts, patterns, details, and emotions in the memory divisions of explicit versus implicit, declarative versus procedural, and episodic versus semantic memory, they are all subject to fading—with many details of the memory, such as emotion and visceral feelings, dependent on recreation. To remember involves weaving together aspects of the experience and the recreation of it subdivided by memory type and within regions of the brain, which may recall the same pieces of a memory together, but never in the exact same pattern. Therefore: Memory is a construct, bound up in the creative, imaginative process. What creative nonfiction does is lay that process bare to the reader.

UNFUNCTIONAL FORMS

For my birthday this year my fiancé handed me a colorful gift bag filled with a serious (and funny) assortment of presents. At the bottom of the bag, wrapped carefully in white tissue paper, was a light blue glazed bowl with a darker cobalt interior. It was one he showed me just weeks into dating. I had loved its colors and how the short, sturdy bowl seemed perfect in size.

[14] Both processes are reflexive of each other.

As I unwrapped the bowl, he admittedly told me that I could not use it, at least not as a vessel for eating, because there were pinholes in the glaze. These pinholes, which I thought gave the bowl another layer of rich character, are footholds for bacteria that arrive after firing. “I made this very early into my career,” he explained. “I can make you new, will make you new, functional pottery.”

He sees the pinholes as fodder for failure because function is part of his craft. I see pinholes, gaps, and fissures as fodder for story, as a means for truer reflections on memory— on me.

I used to think that imagination tarnished the truth of a memory. Thought that I could actually verify the trails of what I remember, and that imagination should follow, not shape, the process to share, to story, a memory. But imagination and memory are fundamentally related, both in metaphoric and neuroscientific nature, which my research and collection emphasize. My memories are kindred to my imagination, and my admission of that does *not* make me a liar like I first thought about creative nonfiction authors at large.

My little blue bowl sits at the end of my kitchen island where I toss my jewelry into at the end of the day. Sometimes, not always, I run my fingers across the delicate pinholes in the cobalt center and think of how function is separate from story.

Stories and writing are not functional. They are creative, expressive, flawed, and blissfully free from the pressure to capture exactly what happened. Free to imagine what happened and what those memories, or lack thereof, can mean.

CHALK DUST

I'm sure the chalkboard that hung in our playroom as kids could have been fun. So many of my friends wanted to play school or write their crush's name across the board, and I just watched, not understanding— because the chalkboard was not something we played with. It was for practicing Rhythmic Writing, a daily exercise my brothers David, Joshua, and I would perform at different times for many years, as part of our "therapy." As part of the training from the National Institute of Learning Development (NILD) because we were dyslexic, learning disabled, challenged, special, and the many other names that meant we couldn't read.

So, we stood at the board practicing, saying, "over back around, over back around," and "left right, left right" as we waited to hear "switch" or "good job" from mom. We'd stand and mirror the laminated instruction sheet's directions taped at the corner not having to ask each other what they meant.

We knew how much chalk to leave exposed inside the green and purple chalk holders, knew how it felt gliding across the board. We knew the faint feeling of chalk dust gently falling from the tips of our fingers down to the floor. Since I was the youngest, there was little or no surprise when I started writing words backward, upside down, or out of order. But there had to be some frustration. There had to be a moment my Mom sighed—knowing my backwards letters weren't some cute mistake I would outgrow, but a reality I would have to learn, have to fight.

The first thing my mom taught me was how to write my last name. *Canterbury*, Mom would write in neat cursive and I would copy. *Canterbury*, *Canterbury, Canterbury.*

ƨarah Ann Canerbury

“You forgot the t, and your s is backwards,” Mom would point out when I tried to write the name after she’d erase her example.

“Oh yeah,” I’d say, “that’s what I meant.”

“You’ve gotta be able to write your name before you start school,” my mom explained.

Canterbury, Sarah Canterbury, I would practice over and over, so I could show everyone who I was and where I belonged.

There is no more chalkboard. We grew up and grew out of it, but I still stand there sometimes in the mind of my memory. Stand there and try to write over and over how I can figure out a way to always belong.

Now I can write.

Now I can read.

Now there’s no chalkboard, but I want the dust of memories to write my name again.

Canterbury, Sarah Canterbury.

REMEMBERING SOPHIA JANE

I heard a faint stream of notes carried by piano keys, dusty keys that journeyed upstairs into my bedroom and through my almost closed door. My family's long neglected piano was desperately out of tune, so each note was a little sharp, and a sort of sour sound lingered, but I could still make out "Amazing Grace."

The familiar church hymn rose and alarmed me, not because it was music or because the hymn echoed through my home, but because someone was playing our piano, actually playing it, which hadn't happened in a long time.

The hymn filled the hall that opened up below my room and it must have ventured into the rest of the house, the way it had years before when my brother Luke still played.

I don't remember how old I was, or how I ventured down towards it. Maybe I was still a child and ran unafraid of what I didn't know, or maybe I slowly walked to the piano, nervous to find out who crafted the echoing hymn.

I found my grandma Jane, my Dad's mom at the piano. She sat oddly far away from the keys and stared at a blank metal music stand. Her feet stretched out to work the pedals and her swollen fingers drifted along the keys, like all she knew how to do in life was play that piano, and that song.

I stared for a while as she played so clearly and looked so lost, "That's really good," I said making her stop and gaze at me.

Her clear blue eyes looked sunken, but she still had that round face and short white hair religiously permed. I couldn't swear on it, but I would bet she was wearing a track suit of sorts, one that would swish when she walked, and was some shade of pastel blue. She had at least one ring on each finger, trapped below her swollen knuckles. I know she still had on the ornate looking golden shield ring, the one with the small diamond in the center held by six silver prongs; I watched it move across the keys creating its own rhythm.

I always wanted that ring. It reminded me the woman staring blankly at me was still my grandmother. It still reminds me.

"You play well," I told her, uncomfortable with how she searched to recognize me.

"Can you play something else?" I asked sitting down beside her on the wooden piano bench.

I pressed one of my hands in the center of the piano and pulled it towards the other side, creating a chilling crescendo. Then the house was silent.

"Do you know how to play?" Grandma Jane asked looking at my hands on the keys.

"Just a little, or I did. I took lessons, but I don't remember much," I said pressing a few more keys down.

"When did you learn how to play?" I asked.

She said nothing, but stared at my hands on the piano and then looked at me like she was searching for an answer in my face.

“Do you know how to play?” I asked, dangling my hands above the keys, pretending to press down.

She looked at them for a moment and then back to me, “No.”

When she had stopped staring at me, she put her hands back on the keys. Her gold ring bounced up and down a few times and then she played “Amazing Grace” again. There was something beautiful and chilling in the hymn. The out of tune piano, the grandmother who forgot me, the icy blank stares, all blended together with the melody, with the sweet song that sings of amazing grace.

There are worse depictions of Alzheimer’s, worse images I remember, but there is a strange comfort in thinking her gift and love of music never left. I like to pretend that her blank stares weren’t those of a grandmother forgetting, but like a child trying to remember.

❖

There is a picture I love of my Dad at the beach, standing in front of the ocean; it was taken years before I was born. He has on green trunks and is squinting a little, and even though I know him by a different hair thickness and color, slightly different build, and age, that picture is what my Dad looks like and is to me.

In it he has light brown hair that, like mine, gets bleached out because of the sun. I can see his soft blue eyes my brother David and I inherited, and he isn’t smiling in the picture, but I know he is happy. He is tan but not dark, and has what my brothers and I believe is the best mustache humanly possible, the one I have never seen him without. His eyebrows are thick,

almost bushy, and his hair is standing up a little maybe because of wind or because he ran his fingers through it.

The way he is standing in the picture is important too: slightly pigeon toed with his hands at his hips, as if he is asking "what's next?" As soon as the picture is over he will begin to chew his lip, a habit he hates but does, and that's my Dad: a man so smart he doesn't know how to get in out of the rain. A man perfectly imperfect, funny, caring, and intense.

My Dad.

My Dad doesn't know I'm writing about him, or at least doesn't really know what I want to say. Part of me wants to tell him, but I think I know how he will react before reading it.

If anyone is around he will say, "it's about time," and then make some comical remark about the pressures of being perfect. Or he might act nervous and say, "it was bound to come out."

He might surprise me and genuinely ask what I am writing, but if I get serious at all, brush it off saying, "that's not true" or "I have you fooled."

I know when he finally reads it he'll cry, fighting not to. His eyes will get barely red and I'll see them start to gloss. If it goes on too long the tears will pool in the corners of his eyes and when they start to drip, he'll take his glasses off and wipe them away.

I want to tell him what I remember.

I want to write it so I'll never forget.

I want him to know who he will always be if he forgot me.

I want him to know.

❖

Researchers and doctors debate over the possible factors, signs, and main causes of Alzheimer's, but share a somewhat cohesive understanding of the disease; that it is progressive, irreversible, and fatal. Wei Kong and researchers with PLOS ONE note that Alzheimer's disease "is the most common form of dementia," and echo that central understanding of the nature of Alzheimer's being a "progressively fatal neurodegenerative disorder characterized by irreversible cognitive and memory deterioration that inevitably leads to death" (Kong 2). Although there is no known treatment, the progressive disease is highly researched. Elizabeth Rosalind Thomas and Bai Jie in their article "Aerial View of Alzheimer's Disease" say "after the onset of Alzheimer's, the patient usually lives at the cliff hanger of life" (356). The "cliff hanger of life" is a vividly metaphoric way to describe Alzheimer's, also an accurate one.

Once an individual is diagnosed, they will likely be told about its "predictable" three stages of degeneration known as the early, middle or moderate, and the severe stage. Then they'll live a "cliff hanger" life, waiting for change, for their memory to leave.

I find it amazing how little I knew about Alzheimer's when my Grandma Jane had it; when I watched its progressive nature take her away, but I was young, and at first it just seemed like a funny part of who she was.

She joked about it in the beginning. That's what my Dad told me, which matches my own memory. We all did it, after a weekend with her we would talk about how many times she asked us the same thing and laugh. But it's not funny, it's just a way to cope so people don't have to cry.

I never thought about what it was like for her to be standing at the threshold of forgetting, at the edge of a cliff just waiting for Alzheimer's to push her off and take away everything she knew about living.

❖

If it hadn't been for the Alzheimer's my Grandma Jane would have told me when she got the golden ring I wear every day, or about who taught her to cook. I would love to talk to her about the best way to get yeast rolls to rise, and I would ask her why she went by *Jane* instead of *Sophia.*

If it hadn't been for Alzheimer's she could have told me about my Dad's first haircut, or about when he lost his first tooth. I don't know if my Dad screamed in a barber's chair, or sat patiently on a back porch or bathroom while Grandma Jane carefully cut his fine baby hair. I don't know if she saved a lock of his light hair in an envelope tucked away in a long-forgotten baby album, or if the occasion was even special to her. Did he learn to talk and walk quickly or was he nervous to try? I wish I would have listened more; there is so much of her I never knew, and in a way so much of my Dad that was lost as well.

Was he like her brothers: Clarence, Jack, and Frank, or did he remind her of Grandpa Canterbury's sisters and parents? Was he always as hard working as he is now? I would love to know.

❖

We were sitting at our treasured kitchen table, the oval relic of my childhood. My Dad sat in his seat, the "captain's chair," the only one of six with arm rests and even though we were the only two in the kitchen, I left one space between us and sat in my chair to the right of Mom's.

The windows were open, letting autumn's chill fill the kitchen. The sun was setting fast, throwing shadows across the yard. I had my used yellow legal pad out ready to write, and I looked at him— my Dad. He sat and shook his foot, the way he has my entire life despite my Mother's best attempts to stop him. I looked into his familiar calm, clear, blue eyes—the ones as a child I swore could cast lightning.

"Do you feel like you had to look at Grandma Jane differently to take care of her?" I ask, going right into my list of questions.

"Well I had to do some really hard stuff, but no. Maybe it was because of my background in medicine I just did what she needed, but no," he said, his eyes starting to water "because I wanted to take care of her no matter how uncomfortable it made me feel. That was my mom and no matter how much every part of me didn't want to see her like that I had to take care of her."

He took in a deep breath and I scribbled as much as I could.

"But I didn't take care of her. We didn't. We love and respected her so much we let her get too far gone," he said referring to his siblings, "she stayed in her house alone way too long because we were in denial. Mom never needed help, never let you help, but she needed it."

My hand started to quiver at this point in the interview. I wanted to ask him about other things, maybe funny things, but I also wanted to reflect on what he already said. Wanted to tell him, you did take care of her, but I listened.

He told about things I didn't even ask and I didn't care, it was great to hear about what she was like. I wanted to know Sophia Jane, the poorest girl from Bolt, West Virginia. I learned

she taught herself to play the piano, that she was the baby with three older brothers just like me, and took care of everyone but herself. He told me about how, even in a nursing home, forgetting everything, she could figure out how to disconnect the alarm and start walking away, and I wanted to know this woman.

But our conversation started to drag and I knew I had to either explain why I was asking these things, which I couldn't articulate yet, or continue with my list of questions.

"Do you feel seeing her like that, and having to take care of her changed how you saw her?" I said, unhappy with my own question. "Do you feel like you have two memories about your mom— the mom you grew up with and then the mom who forgot?"

My Dad took his glasses off.

"When I think of my mom, do I think about that?" he said pulling his hand up to his chin.

"Never," he said which completely shocked me.

"Do I think about the last time I saw her, and she just stared at me with this blank expression. When I told her 'I love you, mom' and kissed her and she had no clue who I was. No. No, never." He said, a few tears running down his face.

"Because that wasn't my mom. That wasn't my mom who rang a cow bell at my football games, or canned vegetables. That wasn't my mom who never let me get up a day in my life without fixing me breakfast. So no, that's not who she would want to be remembered as, and that's not what I want" he said as I wrote as fast as I could.

“What would you tell her,” I asked my Dad, my voice shaking, “What would you want her to know you remember?”

“Mom, there was never a time in my life that you didn’t make it absolutely clear that you loved me. There was never a question about that,” he said, “ I would never want to forget she always put me far above herself, that she was sacrificial, selfless. I would thank her for that, thank her and let her know that didn’t change.”

❖

Alzheimer’s like other diseases affect each individual differently; although Alzheimer’s patients will experience three stages of degeneration the nature of the stages, and course of duration is different from patient to patient. In the earliest stage of Alzheimer’s disease, some patients “suffer from frequent recent memory loss, personality changes with functional decline,” alarming loved ones and signaling the disease (Thomas and Jie 359). Some patients experience difficulty, “to remember new information” toward the end of the early stage but are still capable to care for themselves (Bolt 1).

I liked early stage Grandma Jane. The one I see in pictures holding me, the one who made perfectly set pecan pies, the one who took care of dogs and bunnies, her house and herself. She was forgetful, but she knew and loved me.

Suddenly, though I didn’t understand why, she stopped buying my “doll of the year” birthday presents, or why she began to horde ketchup, shampoo, and laundry detergent bottles. I don’t know which stage I started to lose her, but slowly I knew there was more to the forgetfulness.

The middle or moderate stage of Alzheimer's typically lasts the longest and has the largest range of degeneration. It is where patients experience "pervasive and persistent memory loss, loss of familiar settings, sleep disturbances, mobility and coordination problem[s], and mood or behavioral symptom[s] accelerate" (Thomas and Jie 359). Somewhere between the early and middle stage of my Grandma Jane's Alzheimer's she lost her best friend and husband of 48 years, Thomas Canterbury. My Dad says when he passed away her mind rapidly began to decline, which matches what Thomas and Jie also say about characteristics of the middle stage: "About 80 per cent of patients at this stage suffer from emotional and behavioral problems which are aggravated by stress and changes" (359). How could my Grandma Jane not be aggravated or stressed about the changes though; she was losing the last pieces of her life she remembered, the last parts she could control.

❖

We were towards the back of the sanctuary, just below where the balcony's overhang ends, and the sanctuary opens up; where you can see the baptistery while standing on that light green carpet that covers the floors, pews, and stage. We were in-between the far right and middle section of pews and it was during the evening church service because that's the only reason Dad and I would have sung from there instead of the stage.

My Dad held one of our church's green hymnals with gold script but didn't need to; we knew the words. I stood beside him clutching his hand and we sang hymn 762, "What A Day That Will Be" made famous by the Gaithers but written years before by Jim Hill.

My Dad sang all the verses and when he came to the chorus I joined in, getting a little braver when we came to the line, "When He takes me by the hand, And leads me through the

Promised Land"—maybe because that meant there was only one line left in the chorus, but I remember feeling stronger because I was holding my father's hand, and even at six years old I knew that moment was special.

My church still uses the dated green hymnals and every so often I'll hear:

> There is coming a day,
>
> When no heart aches shall come,
>
> No more clouds in the sky,
>
> No more tears to dim the eye,
>
> All is peace forever more,
>
> On that happy golden shore,
>
> What a day, glorious day that will be (Hill 1955)

When I hear that I'll sit up and think, *that's our song* and I'll sing along, wishing everyone else would stop, remembering the day we sang hand in hand.

It haunts me that "What A Day That Will Be" could become my Dad's "Amazing Grace." And I wonder if he were to forget all of me and remember that, like my Grandma Jane at the piano, would the memory still be sweet? Would I look at him like I looked at her, or could I be happy to sing along pretending he remembered?

The scary thing about memory is not that it is faulty, but that it is liminal. The scariest thing about who my father is to me could be that he could forget it all.

❖

My whole life I heard about what an amazing cook Grandma Jane was, about how her Sunday dinner rolls would lead neighbors in by their smell. About the gallon sized tub of bacon grease in her refrigerator that replenished itself every weekend and flavored innumerable amounts of green beans. About how she would make stuffing and dressing on Thanksgiving just because my Dad liked the extra dry texture of the baked bread pieces outside of the bird.

Donald Duck orange juice, chicken nuggets, butter pecan ice cream, instant mashed potatoes: that's what I remember.

I didn't grow up with Jane the fabulous cook but the Jane who got her stove turned off.

"Well, I would make you mashed potatoes, but I have no stove," Grandma Jane said, her eyes locked on my Dad, her small frame shaking.

"How am I going to eat without a stove?"

My Dad looked tired and a little scared, "Mom, we've talked about this…"

"I might as well be dead," she said, a line she used more and more after my Grandpa Canterbury passed.

I was probably too focused on the painful realization that I would not be getting mashed potatoes to pay attention to how the two of them spoke. But at some point she stormed out of the kitchen, and after a while came back.

I don't know if she asked my brother Joshua and I if we wanted something to eat, or if she came in thinking of her own stomach, but she stood at the stove. Her place of honor as an Appalachian mother, the part of the home that was hers and only hers, the place she loved and

showed love; she turned the heat to high and set a pan on the dead burners. After a while she realized nothing was warm and lifted the pan up to search for the familiar heated glow.

"Tim," she called, "Come here and look at this, something's wrong! None of the burners will come on."

I imagine my Dad's face looking heavy and sad, his lips pressed together hard and eyes glossy, looking in from a doorway or from the dining room hall.

"Mom," he said and paused, "it's not broken. It's turned off."

"Flip the breaker or something."

"No Mom," my Dad said making me uncomfortable, "we disconnected it. On purpose, we talked about this…"

"Why would you disconnect my stove!" she asked, outraged.

"We disconnected it because you forget, and it's dangerous. Remember we all discussed it, me, Todd, Tracy and…"

"You have no right! I'm your mother."

And she relived the moment over again. The humiliation of losing her stove, but worse a reminder she was forgetting. There must have been in the loss some reminder of how much she was losing.

How am I going to eat without a stove? The question stuck with me, but not as much as the question of how much she knew, how much she thought about it? She was losing her memory, the precious, the bad, the hard, her life. And she knew it, but she didn't.

❖

The Alzheimer's Association compares brain cells to "little factories" because they "receive supplies, generate energy, construct equipment and get rid of waste" (ALZ.org). Like a factory, brain cells also "process and store information," "communicate with other cells" and work together to ensure the "factory" goes on, but Alzheimer's changes everything (ALZ.org). The progression of the disease is "just like a real factory, backups and breakdowns in one system cause problems in other areas. As damage spreads, cells lose their ability to do their jobs," and the factory has to shut down (ALZ.org).

Before shutdown, the "brain factory" must experience Alzheimer's final stage, the severe stage. It is when the "patient has confusion about the past and present, total loss of verbal skills, extreme mood swings, behavioral problems, hallucination and delirium" (Thomas and Jie 359-60). To extend the factory analogy, in this stage the "brain factory" has lost all access to its databases, employees, and has long been incapable of functioning – it rapidly begins to shut down.

The brain stops doing what it's designed to do, but not before everything and everyone they love watches them forget: forget where they lived, the people they knew, and their children they loved.

❖

Things I remember about you, Dad:

That time you stuffed maps in my shoes, so I would be tall enough to ride the rock n' roller-coaster at Disney

When you taught me how to parallel park and made me cry

The lesson on family chains

Pretending not to know each other in Arby's so we could use two coupons

How much you love to watch *A Christmas Carol,* but just the one with George C. Scott

Getting thrown out of the snowtubing resort for masterminding an "illegal" assembly run

How you close your eyes when you sing

The time you freaked out our waitress over tomatoes

Scream sneezes

Hiding in the trunk to try and scare mom

Handholding contract

How your breathless laugh is funnier than your jokes

How excited you get when you see a barge on the river

That time you thought you read *Moby Dick*

Flipping bacon with your hands

How you think it's funny to say Por favor after any statement to make it "Spanish"

The time you were going to kill my horse but didn't feel like it after you ate dinner

Watching *Kim Possible* together

How you test the electric fence by touching it

To bed to bed sleepy head

❖

My Mom and Dad's bathtub has leaked for years. It hasn't always leaked though because there are hundreds of bathtub pictures of me and my brothers with that white clawfoot beauty in the background. But it was broken that day. That's why they were in my bathroom.

Behind the shut door I could hear the swish of bathwater and my father comforting my Grandma Jane. They needed to use my bathtub, that's what mom told me. I probably tried to argue why they should use the boy's instead, but eventually I listened when I was told to quickly shower and then put clean towels out.

I sat on my bed with my beloved blue Pottery Barn comforter wrinkled under me. My hair was wet, but I hadn't brushed it yet, which really bothered me. My thin hair dries fast and by the time they were out the tangles would be set.

My room was dim on account of the impractical paper lanterns I had to have, and I could see their light bounce off the full-length mirror that hung on the outside of my bathroom door. I don't know why I stayed up there. No one made me, my Dad didn't need me, but I stayed.

He was so calm, gentle, understanding.

"Here we go, let's wash your hair," he said.

I watched my mirror vibrate on the door with his movements. I could hear the pop of my shampoo bottle being opened, could smell bursts of the familiar coconut scent tangled in my own wet hair come and go, but feel none of it. It seemed weird, all of it, which might be why I stayed. I didn't understand.

My father was bathing his mother, and I didn't understand how he could for even a moment.

At some point my mother came into my room to look for sheets to fit the guest bed. She paused by the door and listened as I did.

"You okay honey?" she asked looking at me.

"Yeah, I'm okay, why?" I said.

"I just know it's hard to see your Grandma not remember you," she said, "I think your Dad knows she has forgotten him too, but he hasn't said it."

I remember wondering why she was telling me this, and also wondering why I hadn't thought about it before. Did she really—not know me? Maybe I had dealt with that, but for her to not know my Dad. It horrified me.

"She wouldn't let him bathe her if she knew who he was," she said taking the sheets and walking out.

"Alright, let's rinse your hair," Dad said through my shut bathroom door.

When he had dried her off and clothed her, he led her through my room, he walked behind her holding on to each of her elbows to support her waning frame.

“Look, Mom,” he said, “it’s Sarah.”

I watched him force a smile as he led his mother, a mother unaware she was supported by her son. That wasn’t a version of my grandma I wanted to remember, but one I can’t forget.

❖

This is crazy, I tell myself as I watch the curser on my Word document blink. *Is this really the only way you can write about your Dad, by interviewing yourself?*

No, but it’s the only way to write about all of this, about your fear, about your reasons to write, I answer. *Okay, so do it.*

Why do you want to write about your Dad?

I’ve always wanted to, but I could never figure out what to say. I’ve tried to write essays about him before, but when asked “what’s the tension,” “what’s the conflict,” I shied away because I didn’t want to go there. Really, I’ve always wanted to write something that would make him proud, not of me, but maybe himself? Write something that preserves a version of who he is to me, one that could make him see how thankful I am for him.

Sometimes for Christmas or holidays I’ll write my parents letters, and they’ll cry and hug me and tell me what I said is the best present they could get. It makes me wonder how they would feel if I wrote the uncomfortable, if I boldly told them what I feel, what scares me. But I didn’t want to go there with my Dad, until now.

My Dad— I’m afraid he has Alzheimer’s. Or, that he will eventually. I have no proof, and maybe because of my grandmother everything he forgets stands out, but it scares me. He calls me Tracy, his sister’s name, instead of Sarah sometimes. He forgets conversations,

important ones we've had and blames it on his hearing. He jokes about the future, about what it might be like when my brothers and I are all married with children and come to see him.

"Hi, Grandpa," he pretends to say, "It's me, Daniel."

"Who? I don't know a Daniel, get away from me" he says in his best old man voice.

"I'm Luke's son, I'm your grandson."

He usually finishes it with a joke, and we sit around our treasured family table and laugh. It's not funny though. It scares me –I don't want to watch my Dad forget and it terrifies me to think about what that moment would be like, knowing I never told him what he means to me, knowing I didn't preserve at least a version of who he is.

I've always felt I had two versions of my Grandma Jane, the early version who loved and knew me but was lost in a way because I was too young to ever really experience her. Then, I have the grandma who forgot me, and the scenes of that have dominated my remembrance of her.

It scared me. It scares me.

I never want to think of my Dad and remember anything less than the person I love and am loved by. I don't want two versions of my Dad, therefore I write.

When you interviewed him you noted everything he admired about his mom you see in him, why do you think he doesn't see it?

That is typical Dad. It reminds me of Sunday school class, which oddly we have together. No matter the topic he'll say how scared he is of the judgment seat, how he falls short, how, like

Paul says he considers himself the chief of sinners. I don't want to be mistaken, I don't think my Dad is perfect. I don't think he is a god, and I don't worship him, but I don't see a chief of sinners, I see a sinner saved by grace who has been for me the closest picture of what God's love is like.

My Dad is always doing, fixing, improving. He doesn't sit, he doesn't stop. So, even though I know he didn't perfectly take care of his mom, he did take care of her. He can't see that though. He sees only missed opportunities and the mistakes. He can't see just how sacrificial he was which I relate to.

What would you tell him? What would you want him to know you'll never forget?

Dad, there was never a time in my life that you didn't make it absolutely clear that you loved me. There was never a question about that. I would never want to forget that you always put me far above yourself, that you are sacrificial, selfless. Thank you for that, and I want to let you know that will never change.

KALEIDOSCOPE

It was like a telescope, except it wasn't—this toy we had growing up that I now know was a kaleidoscope but didn't then. It always managed to make it to the corners of a room, behind couches, and at the bottom of the large wooden toy basket whose handle broke off and hung to the side. The kaleidoscope was mostly black with purple somewhere, I remember purple, and like any telescope I'd seen, I put it to my eye, closed the other and twisted. Twisted together memorizing combinations of shapes and colors— like a tie dye like machine with more symmetry. Like sand art mixed with a lava lamp, changing and turning. I'd twist past beautiful images and try in vain to twist back to recreate some pattern from before, but as the stain glass like sands would roll and twist, I could never go backward and get the same picture.

I never thought about what my brothers might have seen through it. I remember Joshua and I playing with it, passing it back and forth telling each other to admire the multicolored almost florescent picture through the glass and I never thought about how what he saw was different from me, and about how what he saw might change how he saw me.

STORIES OF THE BROOM SAGE

These old Appalachian yarns don't ever have to end. They get better each time you tell them… We are dreamers and storytellers. That's who we really are. And in our stories, we've done something great.

--Todd Snyder: *12 Rounds in Lo's Gym*

Farmers know what broom sage is and what it means. It is the land's way of saying *soil's no good here, plant somewhere else*. But I mistook patches and fields of the grass like weeds for wheat growing up, loving to feel the course clusters at the top of the weed crumble between my thumb and pointer finger, poking my skin only a little before grinding into nothing.

Broom sage has always grown tall and thick throughout West Virginia, especially in 1930 Bolt West Virginia, where miles of farmland had to be tended and no one wasted time clearing compromised soil. So, the broom sage became part of the landscape, even changing colors with the rest of the land, starting green and morphing into amber patches, beautiful patches that artists include in paintings and photographers in snapshots as part of the raw wild beauty of a place like Bolt.

Early 1930's Bolt broom sage, where ticks and mosquitos, birds and mice nested has also become part of my favorite story about my Grandpa Canterbury. I have to imagine it all but it's not too hard as I hear it through my father's voice.

My Grandpa was the youngest with seven sisters and one brother which meant he walked behind the rest of them on the way to school, kicking at loose rocks and country dirt with worn

shoes, and like everyone else cutting through back yards and roads, fields of weeds, corn, and cattle to make it to Bolt's three-room school house, always full before harvest.

I don't know how old or why but my Grandpa, little Tommy, fell back one day from his line of sisters walking to school. Maybe he forgot to finish some homework and dropped down in the broom sage quickly scratching numbers on his school's slate when he heard the bell. Maybe he thought he'd just stay till recess or maybe he grinned knowing exactly what he was doing sinking down into the weeds and chuckling.

With no attendance notification systems, or siblings in his class "room," there was no way for parents to keep track of truants, and once my Grandpa got the taste of skipping school, he didn't go back. There must have been a sly spring in his step each morning that doubled at the sight of broom sage and appeared again as he'd hop back in line behind the others to go home.

For about two weeks my Grandpa lay in that broom sage. Maybe he took naps depression-stricken Bolt children were never afforded, but I think he ran through those fields, pulled shafts of broom sage from the ground, tied them together making shapes and figures, chewed on the edges, and looked at the sky with a grin ear to ear. I think he hummed church hymns, sang campfire songs, and whistled with the satisfaction of his own cunning.

How a child, how he, kept from giving himself away I'll never know, but he was sly. Sly until his hiatus sparked the concern of his teacher.

I imagine him at the table, just after supper, just after the last fork dropped, and the last corn muffin is split and buttered, when the room is still quiet enough to hear people chewing and the soft lowing of cattle from outside. A knock raps on the door, a knock little Tommy thinks

nothing of until he hears his father, Bert David, answer a familiar voice with, “Tommy? He’s fine; something wrong?”

“Oh, I just wanted to check on him, see if he’s okay, since he hasn’t been to school for two weeks. Figured he must be sick.”

Legend tells me— my Father tells me, that Bert David kept his cool, “Oh, he is feeling much better, rest assured he’ll be in class tomorrow.”

I imagine when he shut the door the kitchen cleared out, except for Tommy, whose weeks in the broom sage were about to all catch up to him, and where a story was born.

❖

“You know I hated school. There hasn’t been a person who hated school as much as me, but you gotta go,” my Dad said, “it’s just something you’ve gotta do.”

I was crying on our family room couch over the same thing that had brought me there before: I couldn’t read. I was learning disabled. I must have gotten embarrassed that day at school or frustrated at my own inability.

“I don’t want to go,” I kept saying as I blinked through my tears and wiped my nose.

We all kept saying the same things, circling round and round a reality no one could “fix.” I’d cry that I didn’t want to go to school, and my Mom and Dad would tell me I had to. Each time around I’d start crying harder, until I was gasping for air, and my Mom would pull me in and hold me like someone was trying to steal me away from her and almost whisper, “Shhhhhhh. Calm down Sarah, shhhh, calm down.”

“Did you know I ran home from the first grade every day?” My Dad asks. I can imagine him leaning forward on the couch, his elbows resting on his knees.

“No. What do you mean?” I asked.

“Yeah, well… I was a big momma’s boy, and I cried and cried, didn’t want to start school and we didn’t even have kindergarten back then. But my school was so close to our house that after mom dropped me off I’d start running back home and would beat her there.”

“What’d she do?”

“She’d beat me all the way back to school, and I’d cry every day!” My Dad said laughing, “and you know who hated school maybe even more than me?”

“No,” I said.

“My Dad.”

“But he went to law school” I said.

“Yeah, and I went to medical school, but he hated it. One time he skipped school for over two weeks!”

“How?”

“He was the baby, just like you, and he would walk behind his sisters on the way to the schoolhouse. Now this is in Bolt, so he’d cut through fields of corn, high grass, cow pastures and broom sage. I think it was in the broom sage, he ducked into the heart of it as his sisters walked on. All day he’d play in there and then hop back in line with his sisters when they went home.”

“What happened though?”

“Well one day his teacher came to his house and his Dad, my Grandpa, answered the door. ‘Can I help you?’ he asked. ‘No, I just wanted to check up on little Tommy’ the teacher said.”

I smiled.

“Tommy?” my Grandpa asked, ‘Yeah, wanted to know how he was doing since he hasn’t been in school for two weeks, thought he might be sick.’”

“Was he really gone for two weeks?”

“Oh yeah, you’ve gotta remember they didn’t call home like now, or even really keep attendance, and in Bolt there were three school houses, so I guess Dad wasn’t with any of his siblings, that or no one told on him.”

“What’d his Dad do?”

“He said, ‘Tommy is feeling much better’ and then let my Dad have it.”

Suddenly I forgot about hating school. Forgot about not being able to read or about all the reasons I started crying in the first place. Suddenly I was in that broom sage, in that story.

This story of my Grandpa in the broom sage was passed down from his mouth into my father’s ears, and from my father’s ears into my own. It got better each time it was told, so it could tell me: I don’t understand why you struggle, and I wish I could change it. I know you hate being laughed at, but I’ll never laugh at you. I know you want to run but it won’t get you far. I can’t tell you how to make it right, but I can tell you a story.

I can tell you a story.

❖

My Grandpa Canterbury was an Andy Taylor town figure in a Barney Fife frame. He had extraordinary virtues and characteristics, almost mythically so, but a very real temper, a very short temper, which was his greatest flaw. For a man who was never very big he had a Goliath sized presence which is his lasting legacy.

How I *know* him and what I *saw* of him are two different things. What I saw was a sick man bound to bed who was trapped by oxygen tubes because of his failing lungs. A man who died when I was nine years old and who I guess I always felt distant enough from that I called him, thought of him, as Grandpa Canterbury, not just Grandpa. A man who I thought was too much of a "man" to say what was really going on. A man I never got to know and who never got to know me.

What I know of him is different though. Who I know is the person I've heard about through stories, and that person was bold, strong, unapologetic, passionate, quick witted, genuine, and a devoted man— even if I never saw it. That person shaped the Dad I have and love because he put his family first and challenged the expectation of what a Depression born Bolt, West Virginia boy could accomplish and be.

❖

The house my Dad grew up in bordered Little Beaver State Park which is just outside of Beckley, West Virginia, in a place called Daniels; neighboring the park opened up miles of

wooded hiking trails that my Dad and my Uncle Thomas explored atop dirt bikes and have immortalized in story.

The two brothers actually spotted it some ways off, the dry lakebed of Little Beaver State Park drained so crews could work on the dam or give the water and bed a much-needed sanitation inspection. The flat, open riding surface of the lakebed called out to their youth, promising a thrill where they could ride and gain speed without pausing for a fallen limb or winding curve in the trail.

My Dad was following Thomas, which has never turned out well, when his bike tires started to sink. He stopped and noticed his tires an inch or so in mud and then saw Thomas up ahead—buried deep, his yellow bike sunk to the frame.

"You see, the lake was sloped," I hear my Dad say, "so at the lowest part where water stayed longer, was this nasty tar, mud, or gunk stuff that sucked Thomas's bike straight down and pulled it in deeper each time we tried to get it out."

Together my Dad and Uncle Thomas battled to free the bike, but it was too deep, and with each inch they lifted the bike it sank further into the Earth.

"So, Thomas takes my bike back home, says 'we need to get Dad' and I just wait there, trying to catch my breath. Then Thomas comes back with your Grandpa in his red pickup truck."

I imagine my Grandpa Canterbury stepping out of his truck with clean work boots on, ones that looked worn but somehow have little to no dirt on them. He steps out of the truck and shuts the door and his head would just barely be above the cab. In the scene I reconstruct, he

wears a white shirt, and as he heads toward my Dad, he begins to roll up his sleeves, revealing his trim yet toned build. He is serious but not frowning, and he's squinting his blue eyes a little in the sunlight.

"It seemed like we pulled on that bike for hours," My Dad said as I imagine the three of them covered in wet mud, panting and tired.

"We're standing there panting and I swear out of nowhere Dad's gotten a baby pine tree, pulled it out of the ground, or found one heck of limb, then looks at Thomas and says, 'You know you could have died getting in this mud? You all could have sunk into this lake where no one would have found you; you should know better.'" My Dad says, "Then he starts beating the ever-loving crap out of Thomas."

"Were you surprised?" I ask.

"Yeah, I was surprised!" he says with a laugh, "I just figured he was mad at Thomas because his bike got stuck, but then Dad lets Thomas go, tells him to go home, he starts up his bike and leaves and Dad beats me! The whole time I'm thinking, what did I do?!"

If my Dad's telling the story, everyone is laughing at this point. Even me, and I listen each time even though I could share the story verbatim myself. Somehow, he tells it best.

"So, I'm crying and when Dad's done and starts toward his truck I follow. But he turns, looks at me and says, 'What are you doing?'"

"I'm going to ride home, Dad."

"You're not getting in this truck. You're filthy."

"So, Dad drives home, Thomas took my bike and I have to walk!" my Dad says, laughing even harder, "and I'm crying so much that the glass on my helmet's face shield fogs up and I can't even see where I'm going!"

This story has become a legend in our own Canterbury Tales; I've heard it, honestly, hundreds of times and my Dad laughs every time at the irony that Thomas took his dirt bike home and he had to walk.

I laughed along too until I rewrote the story for a fiction class as an undergraduate. I couldn't wait for feedback, expecting a flood of positive responses, laughs, and comments on my not so fictional family story, because this was a *funny* story, at least that's how it was always told. And the actions of my Grandpa, they were *legendary*, they were part of his "larger than lifeness." My classmates weren't laughing though.

I got a B on the paper and a myriad of confused reactions. So, I thought I must have told it wrong, but when my Dad read it, he was crying with laugher and enjoyed even the beginning sections and descriptions. So, I read the story again.

If I stripped it of family nostalgia, two brothers got in trouble and went for their Dad who got them out and then went a little too far because of fear. But my classmates used words like "child abuse" which my Dad, the storyteller, never used, and I didn't know how to feel.

My Grandpa never said 'I love you boys, and you scared me' which was the pattern in a lot of his stories. For the first time the story wasn't funny: Dad was left to walk home as he cried under his helmet, afraid, skirting around the temper of his father, a massive public figure, a mythical man.

It made me question how my Dad could think so highly of my Grandpa who seemed so unlike the father I love, but what I was missing was not a piece of the story but the reasons for its telling. A story is never a singular thing. A story is as much about the person who tells it and those who hear it. A story lives on forever and gets better each time it's told if those who hear it know how to listen, know what to listen for.

I've just begun to hear my father's stories, my Grandpa's stories, because I've just started to understand what it is to hear.

❖

"They can call me Dr. Canterbury or Sir," my Dad said, as I rolled my eyes.

My brother Luke and his wife Tiffany had announced they were pregnant with the family's first grandchild, Danny, whom my Dad couldn't love more, but before he was born tried to act distant from in a way which I thought was as ridiculous as it sounds, especially coming from him, a giant softy desperately trying to parade as some cold old man.

"I'll hang out with them when they're older," "I ain't getting them anything," "there are good boarding schools to send them to," "don't give me no 'World's Best Grandpappy' crap."

I don't remember exactly when, but I told my Dad "we all know you're bluffing; you'll be pathetic, here's some money, come give 'Grandfather a hug."

"I'll give them money to not hug me!" Dad shot back laughing.

"You are going to love that baby so much, it's going to be pathetic," I said.

Then he got serious.

“You’re right I am. That’s why I didn’t want any, because for the rest of my life I will have another person to worry about. Another person who could break my heart, and I know how much I love you all, and how much we worried about you and it’s just so much easier not to have any. I’m selfish.”

I didn’t know what to say to that. We all knew he was bluffing but I didn’t think he would drop it. Didn’t think he would really drop his guard like that and say what I knew he was feeling and fearing.

“And I’ll tell you why,” he said not smiling now, “When little Michael died it killed my Dad.”

We don’t talk about Michael, my Aunt Tracy’s son, very often, or hardly at all. No one, not even me, not even here. He and I were less than a year apart and he drowned before turning three.

“I’d walk in and he’d be in a room by himself with tears running down his face and I’d say ‘Dad! What’s wrong?’ and He’d say, ‘I was just thinking about little Michael. I just don’t understand it.’”

I had never seen my Grandpa cry.

“I know I’m going to love him that much, that I’m gonna love all your kids that much, and I don’t want anything like that to ever happen where I have to watch you all hurt, where I have to hurt.”

I've been told by so many people the loss of Michael "changed my Grandpa forever." That he never got over it, never could talk about it, that it killed him. I don't know how he *could* get over it though. Like me, he desperately clung to the people he loved, trying in his own ways, as I try in mine, to preserve, to protect, to remember. We are all subjected to reality, and that reality is that we are frail and can't be protected by people or their good intentions. Michael died and so did my Grandpa Canterbury, both never knowing what the loss meant to those around them.

❖

My Dad told me my Grandpa loved to run across Bolt hitting and spinning a wooden wheel. That he would try to run faster, longer, or better than any other boy, attempting tricks that he sometimes would pull off and sometimes would fail when he'd drop the wooden wheel.

If you're from West Virginia you know about places like Bolt and you can see their winding, almost ancient, roads throughout the state, some of which have dirt or spotty gravel peeking out from under the blacktop. Ones where the youth of wooden wheels still live in different houses on that same Bolt land, with those same Bolt memories. Places you'd dread passing through on school busses or church vans because the road is one long sequence of curves and bends. Places with stunning hill sides, valleys, and mountains with broken down trailers with porches stacked high with diaper boxes, furniture, and busted TVs sitting in front of them. Places where you're not sure if there was even a gas station or if the one you saw was actually in the next town over. Places that still refer to land with new houses and families on them as what used to be so and so's, saying that's where the Homeplace, barn, chicken coup, coal house, *was.*

I even still look at the land with this odd distant sense of belonging. Like somehow knowing my Grandparents walked on that ground and lived in that place made it theirs somehow and mine somehow. I even drove out Breckenridge road to see the old Homeplace, the place my Grandma grew up in, the place that was once the heartbeat of Bolt, the place that I go to only in memory, and it's not even there. The Homeplace, barn, coal house, spring house, chicken coup, outhouse none of it. The only reason I know what it was is from others, and because of two pine tree stumps, one maple stump, that still mark its place. I went anyway though, went to the cusp of someone else's property to look at stumps I never knew as anything else, yet there they were. There they are.

Somehow it feels like his stories are there, like by walking those roads and talking with those people I can piece together who he is in story. I know he is not there but maybe that's just the West Virginia in me, where person and place run together, where past pours out of place.

❖

This is really all about me, at least I am self-aware enough to admit that. The truth is, I am obsessed with memory and frightened because of how I remember tainted, half-mythic versions of my Dad's parents. My Grandma Jane had Alzheimer's which dominated my remembrance of her, and my Grandpa Canterbury; although sharp till his final breath, was pale and skinny, short of breath and on life, so all I have is story.

I'm not writing to find out something amazing about them, although there are some amazing things. I'm not writing to find some remarkable connection I have with them, or some trait I believe has lived on in me. I am writing because the thought of human beings slipping

from existence, the thought of my future kids not knowing my mom and Dad, not knowing their reality, scares the everything out of me. The thought of being forgotten, the thought of vanishing that way is terrifying.

❖

"Can you tell me the Thomas story?" I ask my Dad, not having to qualify which one because my Dad knows, we all know.

"Dad was the president of the PTA at Daniels Elementary School, and they were having their annual bazaar" my Dad begins, "Thomas was at the junior high for the athletic banquet. As the president Dad had to be at the bazaar, but he thought he needed to go to the banquet for Thomas too."

I listen, noting my Dad's storytelling cadence.

"So, he went for the dinner and some of Thomas's program, but before it was over, he left to go to the bazaar and told Thomas he'd pick him up when it was over."

"Well, the Wolfs took Thomas home. They lived right down the road from us and I'm sure they offered, and maybe even said 'come on Thomas we don't want you waiting here by yourself, we'll take you home.' But then Dad went to pick Thomas up and he wasn't there."

Dad adds, "There was no such thing as cell phones back them" as if I can't imagine.

"When Dad came to pick us up from the bazaar you could tell he was really upset. I can remember him talking to Mom and you could just tell— he told her, 'I'm going to call the State police.'"

They had a little camper in the driveway that Thomas went into when he got home. Maybe the door was locked, maybe it just seemed like fun, but he went inside and feel asleep.

"We get home, and Dad thinks Thomas isn't there, and it scared Dad. They never told us, 'till we were older, but Dad got threats all the time as the prosecuting attorney and really when he became judge, and people threatened us too."

I don't know how long Thomas was in that camper. Sometimes when the story is told it sounds like hours, and other times only for a moment.

But when he did come out my Dad says, "Dad lost it and commenced to beating the ever-loving shit out of him. I mean I was crying, mom was crying, Thomas was crying, and when he got done, Dad was crying. Mom always said when he got done, he went down to the barn for a couple of hours."

My Dad exhales, as we both sit quietly for a moment, "His temper, he just, that fear, that absolute fear that something happened to Thomas changed to, to."

"Anger?"

"Yeah, anger but no, frustration with Thomas, I don't know, something else."

"Did he apologize?" I ask.

"No, but he knew he went too far that night. He was scared, scared himself."

❖

“I remember when your mom was pregnant with the first baby we lost, before David was born,” my Dad said as I realized this was a story I hadn’t heard before.

“I came home, and she was really sad and you know I was upset too, but I didn’t cry. I wasn’t as good then, you know, and I just tried to let her know it was okay. That it would be okay, but then my Dad came over and when I saw my Dad I just started bawling,” he said, his own eyes watering up, “because finally I could. I didn’t have to be the pillar, I didn’t have to be the person to say, it’s fine, it’s alright, I could tell he was hurting for me too.”

My Dad was quiet for a minute, “I don’t know why I told you that. Dad’s hard to . . . my Dad is so hard to explain.”

A person is hard to explain, but why my Dad was telling me this story really wasn’t. There are reasons we tell stories and reasons we need to hear them told. Sometimes we are telling them to and for others, and sometimes to ourselves.

When I was young, crying on the couch my Dad needed to tell me about the carefree boy his father once was. To me the story told all the things I needed to hear, but to him it reminded him of his pillar. Of the Dad he needed to remember saying, *it’ll be okay, you don’t have to be strong anymore; I am here.*

When my Dad finally told me about where his father failed, about what he could never get over, about the depression and desperation to understand a loss of life, he wasn’t just telling me about my Grandpa, but of himself. When he said “I’d walk in and he’d be in a room by himself with tears running down his face and I’d say ‘Dad! What’s wrong?’ He’d say, ‘I was just

thinking about little Michael. I just don't understand it" he was telling me, *my pillar fell and if he couldn't stand how can I?*

I asked my Dad why he thought people tend to just tell, just remember, one side of the story and one side of a person.

He said, "One side is more fun than the other. One side of a story, of a person, is more pleasant to remember, because when you share a pleasant memory it comes back alive to you. The other side of the story, when you share it, and it brings up that memory it's a sad thing."

My Dad told me stories not so I would understand my Grandpa, but because in those stories his Dad was who he needed him to be. These Appalachian yarns do get better each time they are told, because I don't just get to know my Grandpa, I get to know my Dad. Get to understand who and what he needs and see how he wants to be remembered. And by telling them myself, I do the same thing.

❖

It was 9:00 pm. on a Tuesday when my brother Luke called. I was cleaning out my backpack with its folders full of old, new, useless, and important papers, sitting on my apartment's floor fiddling with my sad excuse for a three-hole punch listening to the Food Network playing on TV.

"Hey, Sarah," he said seriously as I muted the TV.

Luke and Tiffany had gone away for a few days, their first time away from their son, my nephew, Danny, and I thought he was calling to see how Mom and Dad were doing watching

him, since my garage apartment is within walking distance of their house. I thought maybe he tried to call them, and no one answered so he tried my phone.

But Luke didn't ask about Danny. He was silent for a moment, so I knew.

"Ummm, we told Mom and Dad, but I wanted to call you," he said as I knew what was coming. Mom had told me about the bleeding, and about the scare at the doctor's office. Told me that Tiffany was nervous, told me they couldn't find the heartbeat.

"Tiffany lost the baby," he said.

We were both silent for a moment.

"I'm so sorry, are you all alright?" I asked when I knew they weren't. When I knew they put Danny in a T-shirt saying World's Best Brother and watched us all fill with joy. When I knew Tiffany still had nursery décor ideas I'd sent her, baby names picked out, and already started dreaming and praying for this person we'd never get to know.

"Yeah, well, as much as we can be," he said and then exhaled a little, "We went in for an appointment last week and they couldn't find the heartbeat."

I moved up on the couch, listening as Luke explained what I already knew but had to hear.

"Tiff okay?" I asked.

"Yeah, we're okay" he said, "We might come home tomorrow, I don't know."

"Oh, yeah that's right" I said fighting tears, "you all are in the Smokies right?"

“Yeah, I figured we should still come” he said.

“How are Mom and Dad doing with Danny?” he asked.

“Good,” I pushed out, “I love you all. I’ll pray for you.”

“Thanks, Sarah. It’s gonna be okay.”

“Yeah, thanks for telling me. Love you all.”

“Love you too,” he said.

I hung up the phone, put my face in my hands, and felt my ears get hot.

❖

“My Dad was the same all the time. It didn’t matter who he was with. It didn’t matter if he was with the governor, it didn’t matter if he was at work, it didn’t matter if he was at church. It didn’t matter, he was always the same and if he thought something, he said it,” I can hear my father say.

“There was this one time he went to another lawyer’s office that was close for some reason, I think the lawyers name was Berkley, but this guy was meeting with a client who had something to do with selling drugs. This was back when PCP or angel dust was big” Dad adds, “anyway I don’t know why my Dad was there, but he looked at the guy and said, ‘Let me tell you something, you sell any of that stuff to my kids, I’ll kill you.’”

“I’ll kill you,” Grandpa said.

"Hey, now Tom, Tom you don't mean that. So, why don't you…" Berkley tried to say, soothing the tension.

"No," Grandpa said cutting him off, "I mean it. I'd kill you; I'd throw you out that window."

❖

I know I'll pass down the story of my Dad doing snow angels with my brothers in just their underwear—remembering how Joshua and Luke talked my oldest brother David into doing it if Dad would and how he how he came in with shirt and tie and without a moment's hesitation began unbuttoning his dress shirt to David's shock.

I know I'll tell about him carrying two packs in the Grand Canyon, when I, at seven, couldn't handle the weight of mine any longer. I'll tell about how tall two packs looked stacked together on my father's back, and how impressed passing hikers seemed to be.

I know I'll tell about our camping trips, about how when I was too little to ride a horse by myself that he'd hook me in the buddy saddle to go trail riding.

Tell about how he made a promise with my three brothers, that they would always care for one another. That they would watch over each other, and my mother and I, and make sure they were being the men they should. Tell about he, with David, Luke and Joshua got "Not On My Watch" tattooed on their upper rib, under the heart, as a reminder of that promise. And how no one believed Tim Canterbury got a tattoo until our 4th of July party that year when he took his shirt off to play pool volleyball.

But I hope I keep him real, real enough to remember he made mistakes too. That he had to learn to be father and a husband, and that it took him a long time to wake up and realize we were going to grow up without him if he didn't make a change. Wake up and see my mother needed help, that our family needed its father.

I just started to see the truth about my Grandpa and that truth from my Dad. Because the truth about my Grandpa is that he couldn't cope with loss. The truth was that he was afraid and wouldn't let anyone in, wouldn't let anyone see. The truth was that he wasn't Goliath at all, he was David, hiding and hoping his sins and secrets wouldn't be found out. A shepherd boy trying to be king. A farm boy trying to be more.

And my Dad is a lot like him.

My Dad loves my mom, brothers, and me more than anything, and I need to remember that. I also need to remember he didn't want children though, remember that he didn't always have the right attitude or focus. Remember that he could be and maybe is just as much like my Grandpa crying in the dark, which I maybe don't want to admit but need to understand to keep him true; keep him real.

❖

When I came in, I saw my Dad sitting on the couch, the room kind of dark with Danny's toys flung everywhere. I went to their house, right then after Luke called.

I don't know why I wanted to go exactly, but I did; moved through my apartment, downstairs, and through very real spaces that didn't feel real.

“What’s up?” my Dad asked me.

“I was just talking to Luke.”

“Talking to Luke?” he said as he sat up a bit, and his face got concerned.

I put my hands above my head and breathed in, trying not to cry.

“Yeah, he told me” I said as my mom then came in with Danny on her hip.

He waved while balancing his sippy cup to his mouth, his firemen PJs on already and curly blonde hair messy at the bottom. I leaned down and kissed his head.

“Luke called,” I said sinking my head onto her shoulder and starting to cry, hard this time and not trying to stop.

Mom rubbed my back and started to cry too.

“I know it’s going to be okay, it’s just hard. They were so excited, and I was so, and…” I said stammering.

The room was quiet for a moment except for the sound of our crying and then my Dad got up from the couch and walked over to us. He wrapped us both in his arms and we cried.

“When Luke called me, I told him this makes me want to go to heaven even more, want Jesus to come back because now I’ve got a baby up there, I’ll get to meet and a grandchild too.” My Dad said with tears in his eyes too.

I stepped back a little and looked at my Dad.

There we stood with tears and smiles, with death and life and heaven at 9:30 pm. on a Tuesday.

I need to write about this I thought, feeling guilty that I had. But I realized how what I was experiencing right then became a story about me and him— full of things and meanings my words can't contain, only express and deliver like a gift.

I know my Dad thinks about that baby we didn't get to meet. I know he thinks about my Grandpa and what he might have done or said, thinks about the boy in the broom sage. I know my Dad breaks those moments of tension with laugher and charm not because he doesn't care or feel but because of his great capacity to do so. I know he didn't sleep much that night as he prayed for Luke and Tiff, for Danny and for all of us. I know what this story says about him to me and what I hope it shares of myself.

OIL PAINT

You'd know if you opened oil-based paint. It's got a kind of heavy smell that almost stings the nose and has a glimmer to each stroke like oil on bread dough. I think it's hardly used now, at least not to paint inside, stored carefully and used only for paint to protect outdoor projects like decks, sheds, and barns. When I was around seven—the clumsiest, messiest, and dorkiest period of life—my Dad built an addition onto the barn, two new stalls for the six horses we owned. And it didn't matter that I was and am a terrible painter, accidentally flicking specs of paint back on myself and others, he let me "help" paint the barn. I loved it.

Deep red, barn in the country red, pure and rich like a crimson flood of warmth, that was the color of the oil paint I still smell and feel: the symbol of rural Americana, a big red barn contrasted by its white trim and finished off with classic X on the doors.

Far into the summer months with the heat and flies, covered in sunscreen, sweat, and paint we stood on ladders—six to ten feet off the ground—breathing in oil fumes we shouldn't have, and we loved it. I remember the dirty ten-gallon white buckets and the measly stir stick peeking out at the top. I remember the thick and fat brushes I dipped into the paint too far to feel the color on my fingers and slop onto the layered back and sidewalls. I remember slinging the paint onto the boards in an exaggerated fashion, like a sword fighter or a cartoon painter I'd seen in movies, and I remember getting more paint on myself than the barn. I remember Joshua and I inevitably painting each other.

I remember staring at my hands covered in red and rubbing them together, gumming the excess paint into balls and pushing the rest deeper into the pores of my skin. We played tag too,

Joshua and I, initially tapping each other with ends of the brushes, but escalating to strokes across our now-ruined clothes—laughing and running, dust mixed with paint on my shoes and the sweat in my bangs.

"Now, try not to get the trim" Dad said, hunched down by the sides. He held his paint brush carefully and pulled away from the white.

I'd watch and copy for a while 'til I decided to tag Joshua with the brush again or take more broad strokes.

"What did you do??" Mom asked us, frustrated.

We had paint on our clothes, shoes, faces, and ears.

"We painted!"

"You've ruined your clothes" she said, which surprised me. Mom never cared about dirty clothes, but somehow, I knew this was different, this was throw-away dirty. That oil paint stained our skin for weeks, eventually coming out through a formula of chlorine-soaked pool water, baths, and time.

But for a while I could still look down at my hands and think of that. Think of those marks we left on ourselves and each other with that red oil paint and remember.

HOMEPLACE

I come from a people who believe the home place is as vital and necessary as the beating of your own heart...It is your anchor in the world, that place, along with the memory of your kinsmen at the long supper table every night and the knowledge that it would always exists, if nowhere but in memory.

-- Harry Crews, *Childhood: A Biography of Place*

The neuron in my overpriced textbook looked like a dead tree branch and the zoomed in section of the synapse like a skeleton's white porcelain knee. It was for extra credit which I was, and still am incapable of passing up. We had to draw a neuron, and label the parts, none of which seemed very "college," but I love extra credit, so I colored with the few and dull pencils and ignored the line of white in the picture that appeared because of the ridge of my desk.

The neuron was bright green and if it weren't for the zoomed in box of the synapse my eye wouldn't know where to go with the clashing blue, reds, and whatever else. I imagined these spiny branches of "memory" all over my brain and they seemed so frail, so delicate like dry pine needles off a Christmas Tree.

What does it look like in the brain to forget? Does it look like anything at all?

❖

It was a one-story ranch I never thought was pretty; it was cool as a child, but not pretty—my Grandma Jane's house. She and my Grandpa Canterbury, my Dad's parents, built on several times and there were awkward hallways, levels, and too much furniture, but 1000 Grandview Road, in Ghent, West Virginia was hers. My Grandpa was there too, but home just seemed to belong to her.

Grandma Jane's house had a laundry chute, a basement filled with VHS movies, but the coolest part about it was the guest bedroom near the front hall. It was in that room she kept a large wooden bed covered in Beanie Babies, and where she would let us (the grandkids) go into and choose one to take home.

She'd stand in her polyester track suit, or pastel sweater set, stand with her short-permed hair, with her round face and small frame. Stand with her clear blue eyes, makeup free face and swollen knuckled hands, I always remember covered in rings, and smile. Smile from her eyes and say, "Go on and pick out one."

She'd crack the door and we'd rush in to behold a sea of Beanie Babies, and I'd agonize over which one I wanted.

I was the youngest of the grandchildren at that time which is why I didn't notice how strange it was when Grandma Jane started telling us to go in twice.

"Wait before you leave," Grandma Jane, said motioning my brothers and I toward the guest bedroom door, "get a Beanie Baby."

"Mom," my Dad said standing by the door, "they've already got one today."

"They have?" she asked quietly.

"Yeah, did you forge…"

"No. I remember now, yes, I know, they can have another."

"Mom…"

“They can have another.”

Maybe my older brothers picked up on it, but I didn’t; nothing seemed wrong with getting two. But two became three, and we carried them all away without realizing she was forgetting to replace them.

Eventually she forgot to let us in at all.

❖

My Grandma Jane had Alzheimer’s disease; a type of dementia much more complex than the polar extremes in which it is often portrayed in the media.

Alzheimer’s isn’t the happily forgetful, 84-year-old man with neatly trimmed white hair waving from a perfectly kept yard that his grandson mows, and who he tries to pay twice. Alzheimer’s isn’t an elderly person who is dirty, smelly, and hateful, who roams the halls of a nursing home. It is not a drooling incompetent individual who wants nothing else but to die either.

Even though I watched Alzheimer’s silence my Grandma Jane it was only recently I sought to research and understand the disease. I’ve learned so much of what I wish I would have known then. If I would have known who she was— was still living within her, if I would have known change didn’t have to mean loss, if I would have known it’s okay to have moments of joy as you watch someone you love suffer from Alzheimer’s maybe I could have known her.

But what most people don’t understand, what I didn’t understand is that Alzheimer’s is a very long, very painful, goodbye.

❖

If I'm honest, which I believe writing demands, I wasn't extremely close with my Grandma Jane, and because of that I'm still trying to figure out if I should be writing about her at all. I loved her, I know she loved me, but I didn't know her, I didn't know enough of her to catch glimpses of who she was as she forgot.

My older brothers, David, Luke, and even Joshua who is only two and a half years older than I, remember. Remember her handing them birthday cards full of money. Remember her mowing the lawn, driving, and taking care of everyone else. I remember too, but just as a flash, dreamlike memories that leave me wondering, *was it real at all*?

But I can remember one Thanksgiving at her house. Remember how she didn't eat with us because she hovered around everyone else's plate, making sure we had what we wanted, waiting to see if she could spoon more mashed potatoes or green beans onto someone's plate.

I remember I was at her house the first time I had pecan pie and I wondered if anything could be better than sugar syrup pie with hard sugar pecans around it.

I remember staying with her the Easter I ran into a yellow jacket's nest, got stung by the eye, and went to church with a black and swollen face.

I remember sleeping in the bedroom that used to be my Dad's and my uncle Thomas's. The one with orangeish brown carpet that wasn't quite shag, but very similar, with Shady Springs High School pendants on the wooden paneled walls.

I remember playing in the back yard under her enormous apple tree, where Joshua and I would find the smallest apples on the branches, the ones that were powerfully sour and take a bite before we'd throw what was left at each other.

I remember when she still had dogs, Murry a lab mix, Ben a Rottweiler, Gordelia the Australian Shepard with strange light eyes, and at one point a Dalmatian.

I remember her telling us to get candy from the small crystal dishes in her crowded living room. She always bought the hard, strawberry candy, wrapped in berry print paper.

I have gaps in my memory of Grandma Jane though. I remember those small things and see glimpses into a time before she began to forget, but at some point, we stopped staying at Grandma Janes' at all. It didn't happen overnight, it couldn't have, but it seems suddenly we stopped staying and just dropped by on our way to my Mawmaw Pachuta's lake house as she started to become less and less herself, less and less mine, less and less real.

And I didn't even notice. Didn't think to ask, *why's she forgetting, what does it mean?*

What scares me about Alzheimer's is what scares me in life, that everything I am, every ounce of control could just be taken away. That the memory of me could be changed if I forget, I guess I am writing this because of that fear, the anxiety of being lost.

I don't want to believe we are only what we remember. I know so much of how I exist day to day might suggest that, might suggest I think it only matters what I remembered to achieve today but I don't believe that. I don't believe we are *only* what we remember. I believe I will stand before my savior, and He will remember all I cannot, and He remembers what the

world might let slip away. Maybe that's why I feel so strongly she has to be more than what she remembered, and that she is also all she forgot.

I want to uncover what she didn't remember, want to imagine those stories she lost. I want to write of the voices forgotten. I want to show what memory costs.

I write this for her. I write this for me. I write this for you.

❖

My Dad's side of the family doesn't get together often, not because of long standing drama but because of poor planning and communication. We did go to the beach together once, all 16 of us, and stayed in a colossal beach house that had ugly off-white carpet.

My Grandpa Canterbury had already passed away, but Grandma Jane came with us. It was the summer before I started the 5th grade, and first time I thought, *that's not Grandma.*

It was the trip my brother Joshua taught me the game "Taxi" or what I later learned is sometimes called 52 card pick up.

"Do you know how to play Taxi with a deck of cards?" Joshua asked handing me the Joker from the deck.

"No."

"You're the taxi" he said beginning to grin, "Now pick up your riders."

He threw the cards in the air and they scattered, flipping and falling to the ground.

"Joshua!"

“Pick up the riders” he said laughing.

I wasn’t mad, he let me in on a new trick, one I knew we could play together. We must have tried it on everyone there, my cousin Gabrielle, Rachael, Derek, my Dad, but probably not my Mom. I don’t remember though. I only remember—Grandma Jane.

“Do you want to play Taxi Cards?” we asked.

I can see us now, smiling, handing her a card, then throwing the rest in the air. I don’t remember how or why we thought to try it again. I think after she picked up the scattered cards Joshua and I continued to talk about the game. Then, maybe, she asked us again, *how do you play Taxi Cards?* She had already forgotten.

And so, we played again.

Joshua again handed her the Joker, and I again tossed the deck or vice versa, and I watched her pick the cards up, carefully making sure each faced the same direction and the corners lined up together. Then her wrinkled hands held them out only to be asked again, “Do you know how to play Taxi?”

“How do you play,” she asked with her curious blue eyes.

“Well, you’re the taxi,” I said handing her the card, “now pick up your riders!”

We threw the cards. She picked them up. We laughed.

I hope it wasn’t as bad as I know it was, I hope we didn’t think to do it on our own, or that any part us of knew why it was wrong and did it anyway. Eventually I remember feeling sick, realizing maybe right then, it wasn’t forgetfulness. That it wasn’t just a senile grandmother

who forgot silly grandmother things. I knew whatever made her continue to pick up the cards was scary, was wrong, was getting worse.

But I didn't say anything, and I still remember asking, *"Do you know how to play Taxi Cards?"*

And we played,

Again.

Again.

Again.

❖

I went to interview a neurologist. He didn't specialize in Alzheimer's but knew far more about it than I did. I tried to ask him intelligent questions and he was patient with answers. I asked him what it looks like in the brain to forget and he told me about the hippocampus, which was useful in my understanding of how memory and degeneration operates as a whole but was not the poetic illustration of great loss I hoped for.

I don't know what I was expecting. For him to stop and show me a video of memory actively fleeing the brain? Say, *here is forgetting and this is what it looks like anatomically*. I wanted it to be like Pixar's *Inside Out*, where I could watch cartoon spheres of memory form, fly, file, fade, and then fall, with all the brilliance of animation. While the brain is beautiful, I know it's not safe and neat like a cartoon movie. When my Grandma Jane couldn't recognize my

Dad's face there weren't sad little characters in her head who remembered him. I guess in her brain, it looked like nothing at all.

He showed me slides of the brain, and as he rolled them the brain dance began. The images blurred and blended into each other as the gray, white and black shades created a clear yet fuzzy picture.

When I imagine forgetting I see the lobes of the brain on that black and white screen but with trails or rather streams of static flowing. It looks how a globe might if every river and stream was marked on it, but the brain's static rivers bring only a deafening sound; the same horrible sound that bursts through tv and car speakers when satellite is lost, a sound that doesn't drown out all other noise but incites confusion.

What do you listen to? When will it stop?

Forgetting to me are these static rivers, gray and pixelated just how it looks when the image is lost on a tv screen. Since memory is not in one area of the brain these rivers of loss ripple throughout. At the end of these static rivers sit the actual memory: the person, the name, the place, calling out through the noise.

I don't think my Grandma ever really forgot my Dad, her brain just couldn't find his name through the deafening sound of static and intertwining currents of forgetting.

❖

Sophia Jane was born in 1936, on the farmlands of Bolt, West Virginia to Dallie and Lillie Worley. She had three older brothers, Jack, Clarence, and Frank.

The house she grew up in never had a bathroom but chamber pots in each room and an outhouse close by –a double seater built out of necessity when her grandparents Nathan and the original Sophia Jane lived there with their 12 children.

The house, called "The Homeplace," did have natural spring water running to one sink in the kitchen, which was a luxury. She never mentioned the sink to me, but my Dad said it poured the best water he's ever tasted, though it was not fast or pressurized. It was gravity fed and the little pipe pumping cold mountain water would sometimes bring with it a salamander who would squirm in the sink far from its creek bed home. When that happened Dad said his grandmother would walk the line where the spring came from and replace a little mesh screen at the mouth of it that rocks and animals had knocked loose.

I wonder what my Grandma thought of that. Did she take the salamander back? How did city pumped water compare to the mountain spring she grew up tasting? Did she ever get used to the difference?

The Worley family owned Bolt at one point in time, or at least most of it, with a 1,000 acre farm my Grandma Jane's Grandfather, Nathan, divided between four Worley sons and eight daughters. My Dad said the Homeplace was unlike anything I can imagine, and it seems that way— mystic, massive, out of place and time.

What started as a humble cabin was built onto many times and the home was really divided in half. There was a grand front porch and front section that had a formal sitting room or parlor, dark wallpaper and rugs, fancier rooms and hallways. The front section had a beautiful staircase and a lofty covered porch.

My Grandma Jane did not grow up living in the front section. When she grew up with her mother Lillie, and father Dallie, and brothers they lived in the back of the house. I don't know if it was just because their family was smaller, or if the whole house was too much to heat for the struggling family.

My Grandma Jane would have entered the homeplace through the side, screened-in porch that had a cook stove and was connected to the kitchen. Right off from the kitchen was a large bedroom with a stone chimney.

Upstairs led to a hallway, then a few more stairs and eventually to bedrooms. It was where the majority of the bedrooms were, and where Grandma Worley stored her canned goods.

The homeplace had a coal house, smoke house, slaughter house, spring house, chicken house, and barn. There were cows, chickens, mules, horses, oxen, and pigs and I would give anything to see it.

❖

Before this project, the picture of my Grandma Jane that dominated my remembrance of her was of a desperate and trapped woman asking me to take her home from the nursing home Greystone.

When my Dad and his siblings admitted she couldn't take care of herself anymore and really, they couldn't take care of her, they researched and found Greystone. I don't remember a lot about what it looked like, but I remember purple being everywhere and their logo had a butterfly on it. Grandma Jane hated Greystone and every day she was there, she tried to get

away. And while she might have forgotten *where* home was, she never forgot *what* it was, and Greystone was *not* home.

"When can I go home?" she asked.

It was the first time we visited her there. My Dad and his siblings had tried to make the room look like hers, cluttering it with too many pictures.

"Mom," my Dad said sitting down beside her, "you're going to stay here."

"Why can't I go home?"

"This is better, Mom, you don't have to cook or clean, there are places for you to go and things to do, you won't be lonely."

"I want to go home."

I remember that day, or at least parts of it. On the drive to Beckley I had planned how I would make it better. We knew she hated it there, but I thought, in my juvenile perspective, I could be positive enough to make her like it there.

When we entered her room Joshua and I were honestly impressed, to a kid nursing home rooms look more like a hotel's than a prison.

"Wow, Grandma," I probably said, "great set up you have here."

"Will you take me home?" Her eyes looked desperate, sunken, watered.

"You want to stay here, look how nice," someone said.

She sat silently, looking at us.

“I want to go home,” she said.

She was sad, her eyes desperate and all of a sudden I didn’t know how to talk to her, how to fix it.

“Grandma, this is nice, it’s just like a doll house,” I think I said, I remember comparing it to a doll house. Grandma Jane wasn’t a doll though. She was a person. A desperate hurting person.

“I… Want to go… Home.” She said pushing out each word.

“When can I go home.”

❖

Memory is like wildfire. One memory ignites others and leaps from place to place as flames spread and leap. When I went to see my Great Uncle Jack, my Grandma’s brother, who is 91, and lives with his son Tommy with my Dad and Aunt Tracy, every detail one remembered lit another. What started as faint memories ignited into scenes, I don’t imagine this Homeplace anymore, I see it.

I see the calf lot near the barn and the water trough. I see the Maple Trees, massive Maple Trees that stood beyond the house, and the pine trees on either side of the front porch. I see the strange difference between the front and back section of the house. My Dad, who hates books, but loves C. S. Lewis said the door to the front part of the house was like the wardrobe into Narnia, truly a portal into a different world; and I see that too.

I see myself as a child there, like my Dad once was, and can imagine myself with my brothers there as we challenged each other on who could step in the farthest and see who wasn't afraid to climb the ladder into the attic.

I see myself at Grandma Worley's dinner table where at least 16 different dishes, meats and potatoes, garden vegetables and canned goods sit out in mismatched bowls, where I taste savory corn meal biscuits and sweet molasses cookies.

And I hear there.

I hear the sound of Grandma Jane working with her mother at the stove, the clanging of pots and pans, the crackling of hot oil used to fry chicken, and the bubbling pops of bacon grease and water simmering handpicked green beans. The sound of cows lowing in the distance, the laughter of children, the pounding of their feet, the call of my Grandma Jane's Uncle Miner who lived on the farm one over—hear his deep serious voice carry through the hills, down to the Homeplace, calling "hhhhheeeeeeeeyyyyyyyyyyy Daaaallllliiiieeee." I can hear him and see my Grandma there crouching at Uncle Miner's billowing voice as her father got up to meet him.

I can see it before my Dad grew up there, before my Grandma Jane's Dad Dallie was sick, and before the three lightbulbs were added to the massive house.

I can see my Grandma, young as she steps into dirty bathwater her mother heated up bucket by bucket on the stove every Saturday so on Sunday, they could all walk to Breckenridge Baptist Church clean.

I can see her getting an orange or apple on Christmas and being truly thankful. Can see her mending her overalls and see her helping her mother fix the flour sack wall paper in their kitchen.

Her world is so different from mine, sitting at my well lit, central heat and air-conditioned office gazing at my large computer screen. Sitting in my cozy apartment with its own bathroom, washing machine, and decorative wallpaper, how different my world is.

But when I walk down to my barn, when I hike the trails behind my home, or smell the crisp leaves of fall I see myself where she was.

I smell the farm that made her— her. I see the Bolt land much like the land I love. I taste buttermilk biscuits drizzled with sweet mountain honey and I hear the call, "Heeeyyyyyyy Daaaallliiiieee." Hear the billowing call of mountain voices and of a past life. "Heeeeeeyyyyyyyyyy Dallllllliiieeeee!" echoes in my head as it did through the hills of Bolt, and in my Grandma's ears.

❖

Families and caregivers of someone with Alzheimer's are often concerned "Mom isn't herself anymore" or Dad, or whoever, and in a way the disease does rob individuals of who they were, but something I wish I would have known to look for is the essence—the glimmers of who someone is that remain. Glimmers even Alzheimer's can't touch.

My Grandma Jane was a server. She took care of everything and everyone else she could. Always. That was more than what she did, it was who she was.

I don't want to make her, or her serving trait into something it's not though, idealize it, and make her a suffering saint. She was a perpetual work martyr. The person who volunteers for everything and then complains about all they have to do. The person who has so much to do but refuses to let anyone help them. The person who will never admit how much they love serving. That's not perfect, but it was her.

Some say being a caregiver is a trait of motherhood in general, which I am not going to argue against, but my Grandma Jane's caregiving was separate from her role as a mother. She fed you before she fed herself. She clothed you before herself, she cleaned up, she mowed the lawn, she served.

It was why she was never in style. It was why her friends, her true friends had to tell my Grandpa Canterbury when and where to buy her new clothes because she was never going to do it for herself. It was why she didn't wear makeup and had the same short permed hairstyle her entire life. Every waking moment was a moment she needed to serve others—not a moment to care about herself.

If it meant she spent her entire day buying food, cooking it, and cleaning it up alone, that's what it meant.

If it meant staying up all night to can extra green beans, she could have just bought, that's what it meant.

If it meant getting up at 4 o clock to make everyone else breakfast and pack everyone else's lunch, that's what it meant.

Long before she was a mother, she was a poor farm girl from Bolt. A poor farm girl who grew up with a mother who served others, who took care of those who were sick, gave haircuts and food to anyone who came by, and who nursed her own husband for decades. The first lesson my Grandma ever leaned, what she saw every day, was how to be a caregiver, and that never changed. It was a reason Alzheimer's was so hard for her— it meant she would have to be taken care of, and no one took care of her. That was her role.

❖

My Dad said taking Grandma Jane to a nursing home was the hardest thing he's ever done, and I believe him. That was his mom. His mom who tucked him into bed at night, his mom who went to his football games, his mom who loved him and he had to drop her off at a place she didn't want to be.

He and his siblings were faced with a hard reality that faces every caregiver, the decision about when their loved one can't take care of themselves anymore, and when they can't do so either. He feels guilty about it, still.

She went downhill fast there, but what else was there to do? She didn't know who we were and maybe not even herself but she knew home. Greystone wasn't home.

I wonder what that felt like. I wonder which part of being there signaled to her, *Jane you don't belong here. Jane this isn't home.* The absence of hoarded possessions, furniture, the rooms? A home is, in reality, just a structure but don't we make it more? It becomes a place of firsts, lasts, changes, milestones and love. Home binds us to each other, and to the world.

Did she miss the hallway where her babies took their first steps, did she miss the living room where she watched them open presents Christmas morning? Did she miss the little features she couldn't remember why they were special but knew they were for some reason?

When my Dad cries he does everything not to—the rims of his eyes get red and begin to fill with water but before a tear can fall he takes his glasses off and rubs his eyes hard. He does that every time I ask him about Greystone. He does that every time we talk about his mom.

He told me the day he came home from taking her to Greystone he cried like a baby. I don't know what I did after she asked me to take her home the first time. I probably thought about it for a while and then moved on, but I would cry harder than a baby if I had to take my parents there. I would cry like a broken-hearted grown woman.

The pain of a child leaving a parent is easier to imagine than what hers was like. When we left, when she sat alone, did she cry? Did she look around the room covered in pictures and weep not knowing the faces? Did she cry and forget why? Did she wake up and have to figure out where she was each day?

I don't know what it is like to have Alzheimer's, but I can imagine the pain of leaving home, and if I woke up in a doll house version of my home, a new home that although pretty is not real, is not my own, one where I am trapped— I'd cry and cry until I was weak. I'd eat and sleep only to gain my strength, so I could cry again.

I don't know what she thought, or who she remembered, but she held onto home. When she forgot me, when she forgot herself she recognized Greystone was never home. Which means at some level she remembered home. Which home did she remember?

Did she see herself as a mother at 1000 Grandview Road, waking up early in the morning feeding children and playing the organ, or did she see herself as a little girl walking about on the farm? Did she look around and wonder where her organs were, or did she look for the outhouse and the sink that brought mountain water? Did she see both, did she see none? Maybe she forgot both homes but held on to their essence, and they held on to her.

❖

Bolt has changed. It has a gas station or two now, bigger and more houses, and a stoplight, but the land still rolls and climbs. The mountain peaks still cling to snow that melts in the open valleys below and the leaves still cast amber shades before they fall to the ground.

"And that's where the barn was" my Uncle Thomas said pointing to the Homeplace's lot, "it was a lot bigger than that red one though."

I looked at a sizable red barn with curious cattle peering out at us.

"How big?"

"It could hold 18-20 head of cattle inside. It had three hay lofts and four stalls for dairy cows" Thomas said. "There were these worn rings in the wood where the cattle rested their necks, and that wood was swayed and smooth but hard as nails."

"And the Homeplace was right behind those pine stumps?" I asked.

"Yeah, and those are the maple trees, well what's left of them."

I tried to imagine it all there— the Homeplace, with its barn, outhouse, coal house, chickens, cows, hayfield, and mountain spring. Tried to imagine the massive pine trees beside

the front porch that sit as stumps now, and the cut down maples sitting as a small reminder of a lost Homeplace.

I took a picture of the stumps through a red gate with strands of barbed wire on either side. As I took them, I wanted someone to drive by or walk up and ask me, "why are you taking a picture of a stump?" So, I could answer: *Because I remember all they once were. I remember how they stood, and who stood underneath them.*

The maple leaves, the pine branches are gone. Their branches and trunks casting no shade and towering over no one, but their roots run and call out from the ground. *I was here. I have lived; I'll live on.*

I imagine those maple stumps tall again, full grown living trees again. I imagine, on a Bolt summer day leaning against one with long pigtails and a worn cotton dress, my Grandma Jane, and I see her as a girl.

See her as a girl who works in the field and garden, milks the cows, and can toss hay bales as good as any man. See her bouncing as she plays the organ in church and dusting off her shoes as she walks home from school. That's the Grandma I'll remember. The Grandma who will always be all she forgot, and whose story cries out with the tree roots.

I was here. I have lived; I'll live on.

CRAYON CAVE

"You want to go in, or do you want me too?" Mom asked as we both looked at the water-warped closet door.

"I'll go," I said as I pulled it open, pushed the coats hanging in front of the smaller cubby hole style door—whose frame doesn't even make it to my waist—out of the way and dropped down to my knees to crawl inside.

"Be careful," I heard Mom say from outside the hall, "watch out for the nails the wreaths hang on."

After ducking past the door and shuffling strands of Christmas lights, I cleared a spot where I could stand. The room— a 5x5x6 space under the steps, doesn't even feel that tall because of the slope from the steps and is almost a cupboard or a hidey-hole, although it always seemed enormous to me as a kid.

"You know, it's funny," I said pulling my hair back and bending down to pick up the red and white snowflake box that I know has all the ornaments inside.

"What is? How much stuff I've got in there?"

"No," I said as I passed a bag of garland and strand of lights through the door to my mom. "I feel like I've gone back in time when I come in here."

Covering the bare walls are memories carved in crayon. The greens and blues, with reds and yellow outlining what once were our favorite pictures to draw, the walls a narration in pastel of our heights and ages. *Luke was here, Leader David, Jacob* and *Joshua, Elizabeth, Gabby,* and

finally, *Sarah* illustrating the pride that came when we finally learned to sign our names and sign them right, marking our world with them.

This was the clubhouse, a crawl space later to be filled with decorations, but then it was *our space,* covered with symbols that share their own history like cave drawings deep in the mountains of France.

"Johnny signed the wall," I said looking at the message in green from my uncle reading "Johnny was here, 5'11'' 1994."

"Your Grandma Jane signed it somewhere too," Mom said reaching in for another load of Christmas boxes.

"I don't see hers."

She yelled, "Is that all?"

"Yeah." I said still looking around.

"Well, are you coming out of there?"

As I crawled out and shut the door, I saw the crookedly taped paper sign that still hangs on the door:

Leader David Canterbury,

Club Members: Jacob, Elizabeth, Joshua, Luke, Sarah.

"Sign's still on the door," I said smiling.

"Yeah, anything spelled wrong?" Mom asked unpacking boxes.

“Yeah,” I said with a laugh, “it says ‘Lether’ instead of leader.”

“You know that’s something you can write about.”

“I know.”

SHADOW SMOKE

"But tonight, memory holds her sway amid the shadows, time has closed but not healed the wounds of my heart…still my nature is that I cannot forget. No, wherever I roam, under whatever clime I am cast by the accident of human events, my heart turns with irresistible longings to my old friends and home where I was sheltered lovingly in a heart that was all my own."

-- Flora Adams Darling, *Mrs. Darling's Letters*

Smoke. I smelled smoke, not an alarming smell that would have made me run from the highly flammable library I was in, but smoke. Its unique and heavy smell that kisses your skin at campfires and soaks into your clothes reminding you where you've been.

I was holding a little gray book with tea stained pages. Drawing the cover to my face, I inhaled.

Smoke.

I smelled the book again, over and over, wondering if it was real or imagined and why it mattered at all. Maybe it was passed around a real campfire, read with spirit, read with love. Or maybe it was almost burnt into a pile of ash until some brave soul snatched it from the fire. But what could I report: here is a book and it smells like smoke, which is telling me, *I have a story, a story you don't know.*

It makes me remember.

Remember how I loved to watch the fire, and how it seemed so old a thing to do on camping trips. To watch, how on the tips of flames colors burn blue and green and the whole flame shakes as the colors run out. To watch the firewood charcoal and how the heat leaves some

of it in pieces, but most as ash. Watch the ash fly and travel up with the smoke before falling back to the ground.

Remember how smoke never seemed to just rise. It tilted and arched down into our faces, and how we'd say to each other about whoever was followed, "smoke follows beauty," and be strangely happy it chose us for the night.

Remember how smoke casts a shadow, but fire doesn't, can't. Fire is light and light has no shadow. Smoke flees the flame, is created by fire, then casts its own shadow over the thing which created it.

I smelled the book again and smiled some as if to say back to the book*: I have a story, a story you don't know.*

❖

Morrow Library nestled on Marshall University's campus has a beautiful front entrance that shows off the grandeur of its 1931 construction with locally crafted brick, antique corbels, and many arched windows, but the grand double doors are bolted shut and grass has grown over what once must have been a walkway up to the front entrance.

But I'm here; inside the Rosanne Blake Library housed in the antiquated library's special collections floor. Morrow houses "the stacks" a dusty labyrinthine of government documents, periodicals, and books that all require the use of call cards my parents still talk about from their college days. The Blake Collection on Civil War and 19th century literature is its own

subterranean world of archaic sources pulsing with information that seldom reaches outside the walls.

This morning, as is my routine, I entered through the back doors, leading to a forked set of hallways, hallways with no reception desks or guides. I walked up the two flights of steps, signed in under my name from the day before, and navigated my way down the maze of offices to get inside the slightly too warm Blake Collection.

This morning I arrived before Mr. Dickinson, the curator, so I missed the humming sound the dehumidifier makes after he empties it from the corner behind me. I have seated myself at the second table in the middle of three chairs and nod to the soldier mounted on a rearing horse in the painting across from me. Unpacking my bag, I twist my hair up, and then slide the stacks of books pushed against the edge of the table back around my computer, picking up where I left off the day before.

From my table I can see through the middle stack of books to the front glass-lined case with artifacts and figurines, but I stare at the stacks of books I have divided and put my head down on the smooth wood, my non interruptive way of screaming. *What does it make it now Sarah, day six of not having a clue? If you hadn't gotten the grant would you still be here?*

I wanted to write about the roots of my family in West Virginia. Wanted to write about the beginning of the Homeplace I've explored through memory in other essays and I was excited—determined— to do so before I got the Blake Scholarship that paid me to write what I already planned to.

I wanted to write about the beginnings of those characters I'd heard of through story—about my great great grandparents: Nathan and Sophia, their children, myself, and their place—Bolt West Virginia.

Because I'd written about Bolt, about my family before, each time getting pulled further and further back into the shadows of memory. And I have come here to chase them somehow, to triangulate my way back through other lives, to know what theirs must have been like. But I don't know them and don't know why I wanted these things at all so I feel like a liar.

Why don't you list everything you know about them? It consists of when they were born and died!

Picking my head up from the table, I read my mentor's email again.

"Think about how this is actually a search for yourself, for your roots, for true memories that aren't yours but can be, should be. Combine the research with the speculation and trust those flights of fancy."

What aren't mine but should be?

I don't know them, but they matter to me. So this matters. This is an uncovering process about a history of strength, about a world in a continuous process of damage and healing, about reconstructing a character I don't really know by piecing together the space around her and imagining what it must have been like to live that life, her life.

This started as a grant, but you know it's more. You know she's more. She, Sophia, the start of it all.

And this is about coming to terms with the impossibility of memory because history and story is, as Trouillot says, “the fruit of power.” But that fruit, that “power itself is never so transparent […] the ultimate mark of power may be its invisibility; the ultimate challenge, the exposition of its roots” (xxiii).

Bolt has to be in me for it to come out, and that invisibility strengthens the roots I never noticed before. We look not for the reality of what’s been remembered but the truth in what is gone; what’s left in the shadows, what’s sparked and made in the gaps between them. So, I open a book and start reading for what I imagine isn’t there.

❖

My first trip to Bolt was exhausting. Not just the winding drive, skipping lunch, and bed bug scare, but the names. When families have double-digit numbers of children, and those children have children, and everyone knows their neighbors, but you’re not a neighbor, you’re generations removed from the children and the neighbors who have died, the names become like a haunted version of the book of Numbers. Bolt stories are fast too, and instead of neat and streamlined Old Testament lineages, the names and people, stories, and years merge together.

I had to study Bolt’s Old Testament: which is a conglomeration of those who remember the Homeplace and the names and dates available in the Worley family cemetery, but still get confused.

I found that Nathan Mason Worley married Sophia Jane Wheeling in 1875 and came from Montgomery County, Virginia to Bolt, WV.

That's the start. Nathan and Sophia, who had fourteen children, twelve of whom survived, filling their Homeplace with eight girls and four boys. Two of their sons, Minor and Dallie Wade still survive in the stories I've heard from Bolt storytellers, including my Dad.

Sophia's son, Dallie, grew up in the Homeplace his father, Nathan, built. He married my great grandmother Lilly and took care of his mother, Sophia til' she died and then continued to raise his family in the home he grew up in. Dallie was my Dad's grandfather who raised Jack, Frank, Clarence, and my grandma Jane, in the same flour sack kitchen and fabled narrow staircases where he was born. I know Dallie was soft spoken and that Lilly took care of him later in life when he got sick and stayed sick. I was sent a picture of Dallie standing beside what looks to be a rocker wearing a slightly baggy suit and sporting a reserved but boyish grin that makes me believe he had many things to say. I wish I could have sat on that porch and listened.

Minor was my Dad's great uncle, Dallie's older brother, who married Elise, or "Aunt Elise" as everyone calls her. Minor stayed in Bolt and built his own Homeplace where a fallen down barn still remains. He was the opposite of soft spoken Dallie, with a booming deep voice mentioned by everyone who knew him, echoing its way into folkloric memory.

I have stories of them and only shadowy sketches of Sophia, but shadows still. I know she was born to John and Sarah Wheeling in 1859, one of six children, and married Nathan when she was sixteen years old. I know that when Nathan died in 1898, she had seven children under the age of 12 and ten children still living at the Homeplace. I know she is buried in the Worley family cemetery, which is the reason my Grandma Jane, who was named after her, went by Jane.

So, the children who teased her, as they skipped past the cemetery on their way to school, pointing and chanting, “you’re dead, you’re dead” would stop.

I know her tombstone says “Mother” in letters bigger than all other words, even her name: Sophia J Worley wife of Nathan M Worley. And I know that at the bottom of the stone, slightly covered in green aging moss is carved, *She was the sunshine of our home.*

❖

“You constantly have to remind yourself that most readers will have no clue what it means to be from a place like Bolt, West Virginia … thus, it is your job, as the writer, to show them,” Todd Snyder, an Appalachian author and friend, wrote this in a note to me on an earlier essay about Bolt. And I was reading it again. Reading old comments from a dated draft, not even sure why I was reading them at all.

West Virginia, this place and its history beg for explanation, like just saying its name or knowing its location is never enough. Especially to anyone outside, but even for ourselves— as if our hollers and mountains stand listening behind us, hovering in the shadows of our imagination known and unknown, uncanny. It’s like this place is part of our family so we know all about it, know the good and the bad, but also that no one else can talk about our family, even if it’s true. And that you can’t describe a person, just share a few stories trying to paint who they are to you.

Show them. *Show who and show how?*

Bolt is the place of my grandparents Jane and Tom Canterbury—the place of my Dad's grandparents Lilly and Dallie Worley. Bolt is the place of Dallie's parents, Sophia and Nathan. Bolt is the place my Dad lived as a baby in a small home with no indoor bathroom that his parents left when he got too sick as a child. Bolt is the place my Dad remembers driving to each Sunday for church until his family moved further into Beckley and further from the Homeplace—the place my grandparents really belonged, and the place I never got the chance to ask about.

Bolt is winding roads.

Bolt is a community less than 600 and from a beginning even smaller than that, growing slowly, glacially, generationally.

Bolt is a stunningly raw and wild 5.4 square miles of Queen Anne's Lace sprawling over empty meadows, where wildflowers grow among the weeds. Where dogs are often stray and country farms tend small herds of grass-fed cattle.

Bolt is the home of country singer Little Jimmy Dickens, which is proudly posted on their green and white county sign on the one road leading in and out.

Bolt is a place of shadows. Of real ones cast from the mountain and memory shadows fighting not to fade.

It is mountain fog and cool spring water, rolling hills with lightning bug lit skies. It is trailer park and food stamp country full of the sweetest people who seldom trust the outside.

I've been so afraid to write what Bolt is because I've been lost in the research from thens and nows hearing all these reasons why someone can't explain a place. Of course they can't.

I don't know what it means to be from a place like Bolt, and I do.

Place binds us to each other like a home centers us in where we go and come from in the world. Place, like a home, is fact and feeling tied and separate from so many other things that make it impossible to wholly explain.

We can't understand what it means to be from a place like Bolt or anywhere else, which means we understand a small part of what we know nothing about.

❖

Nathan is dead. It's 1898, he's dead and I've got a baby. I've got a baby, almost one, got Lura who's three years old, got Grace five, got Johnny seven, got Dallie nine, got Minor eleven, got Lacy twelve, got Bessie fifteen, got Carrie seventeen, got Rosa nineteen. Thank God Millie and Lilly are getting married. Ten children to feed is better than twelve.

Got this house, got my homeplace. Got work to do.

I don't know if you said that, thought that, Sophia, but I have nothing from you, and sometimes what I imagine is more powerful and seems more truthful than anything I find in the library— from dusty pages and family silence. You are what was, I wonder what could have been, and research what must have been to explore what isn't written down. *He's dead and I've got a baby*- those are true words whether you said them or not.

I don’t care that loss was just more common, that husbands and children died, and it was a part of life. It may have been, but it was a part of a life with no safety net. No life insurance, no lump sum of cash promised to spouses and children if the livelihood of their existence died. You had to feel at least the absence of your husband’s work. You had to worry about sickness, not about how it might make you suffer, but about what it might take from your family, about their inability to survive if anything else went wrong.

I think I would fall apart in your world, overwhelmed by that much of what is real. At this computer desk, in these books I read, I’m never hungry, never cold, and yet I’m still trying to relate to hardships I haven’t faced. My pain is real, but my life is protected. Insurance, education, opportunity, privilege, I’ve had every opportunity you didn’t. I don’t know the reality of living in your Homeplace, but I’m still born from a long line of suffering and strength.

Recent theory on trauma expressed and suppressed, have come to assert that such pain is often passed on through decades and even centuries of individuals. Cathy Caruth argues that trauma is generational, that it is a wound that speaks across time and space, traveling through the genes, and passed along like an heirloom, like a heart beating.

Maybe the strength that comes of trauma can sing in the blood too in the way that smoke reminds us of fire. I want it to. I want the strength to sing and the smoke to stay.

I’ve got this house, got my homeplace. Got work to do too.

❖

“None of this was here,” my Dad said pointing to the gas station Subway combo and the new convenience stores sprinkled along our drive through the neighboring towns outside Bolt. He repeated “I wonder if” statements about stores, houses, and barns followed by faintly surprised, “oh it’s not” as he discovered the place changed.

“Right there,” Dad said as he pointed “there was a gas station and every now and then Dad would stop and get us a Pocahontas pop to share. We came here all the time, came here every Sunday for church for years, you know, until we moved out Daniels.”

He talked about the coal car that he and Thomas played in and the pit he fell into out of a station wagon as a boy. He told me about the “use to bes” and the “once weres” as I watched my Uncle Thomas’s SUV in front of us bend with the land. And with each turn, my Dad would narrate the movement like a copilot. Going to Bolt felt like being in an old movie, but not one anybody would pay money to see.

“Mary doesn’t live on this road,” my Dad said, when Thomas turned off the main road toward Mary’s house.

“Mary and Dexter lived out across from Minor’s farm,” he said so sure of himself.

“No, Mary lives at the end of this road” I said remembering the narrow gravel path from my last trip.

“Mary doesn’t live here,” my Dad repeated, “she didn’t used to.”

“When’s the last time you were here, Dad?”

“I don’t know for sure,” he said, “20 years.”

“Things change in 20 years, Dad, even in Bolt.”

The house Mary lives in now sits off to the corner at the end of a narrow gravel road. Her porch is lined with wind chimes and rain-soaked plants to match the flooded driveway. Even though she told us to take it down we all swung our leg over the baby gate at the edge of the porch, perhaps not wanting to disturb the world we had entered like pilgrims to a shrine. And her home *is* a shrine to her family, with pictures plastered across every bare surface of her walls, making its own sort of smiling wallpaper. Every shelf, case, and counter is covered with knickknacks, aging Christmas and birthday cards, and unopened mail except her large dinner table with sturdy dark wood set with a homemade table runner, napkin holder, and salt and pepper shaker, ready to serve in its loneliness.

As we walked inside, her phone rang because like a good holler home, in a good holler village, Mary is protected by her neighbors who don’t trust a strange face.

“Yeah, it’s okay,” Mary said, “Timmy and Thomas are here, Jane’s boys.”

It’s the signal, a stamp of approval that we can belong in Bolt because we are a part of what used to be.

The Mary Worley I go to see married either one of Minor’s sons or grandsons and was about the same age of my Grandma Jane. She stayed with my grandma in the Homeplace growing up, got haircuts from Lilly like the rest of the town, and picked wildflowers with my grandma the day she got married.

First, I listened to what Mary shared about Bolt today as I learned that interviews don't work here –the memories I wanted from her needed to be eased out, sparked first then stoked until they poured like campfire smoke out the damp, crackling wood of the past she remembers.

Mary couldn't tell me much about Nathan and Sophia or about their move to West Virginia but assured me she'd find some papers that might help once she got "to cleanin' out that back room." I wasn't surprised she didn't know much about Sophia and promised her I wasn't looking for something specific.

"I just want to hear about Bolt, just want to know about Dallie and Minor, about anything you can remember," I said.

"Ohhh I could just sit and listen to the stories Minor told for hours," she said.

Even though Minor isn't Mary's father she talks about him like he was, talks about him like he called yesterday and like he was always a part of her life.

"What were some of the stories?" my Dad asked.

"What?" Mary said.

"What are some of the stories?" I asked.

"Ohhh, well, I don't know, he'd talk about all kinds of stuff and people. Who got married, and their kids, stories about when he was still dating Aunt Elise."

Mary smiled and then sighed, "now that's something I wished I'd written down. That's a mistake you never forget."

That's a mistake that drives me, or the fear. My memory smothered, extinguished, with no one around to notice the smoke.

❖

I have folklore about the Bolt land and intertwined, winding paths of research that reach and float along, going nowhere and everywhere. Stories say Nathan Worley traded his farm in Virginia for 1,000 acres in Bolt and that Virginia Tech would be built on the land he traded. They say that something about the deal went sour, as I was told, "That's why Worleys hate Virginia Tech," but still didn't understand why that would be.

My Dad is convinced Nathan had 1,000 acres: "they owned everything from the red barn we passed coming in across both meadows and even up where Mary was." But then again, my Dad hadn't been to Bolt in 20 years, because his tie, his parents, were gone and maybe it was just the business of life that kept him away, or maybe he didn't feel tied to Bolt.

Virginia Tech has no record of the Worleys on their school's historical reports, but there are records of four farms over 1,000 acres in Raleigh county at the time Nathan came to Bolt.

Historically, the deal Nathan made had not only the potential, but also a high probability to go sour. Records of Nathan's father, Jacob Worley, show his farm in Montgomery County Virginia to be some 35 acres with three cows, only one horse, and an estimated worth of $700, leaving little land to be given to Nathan after the trauma of the Civil War.

Even inside the reality of those records I must speculate, knowing only that Virginia born Nathan and Sophia are buried in Bolt, West Virginia, where their Homeplace was, where their children grew, and where they were proud to die.

Their once new roots now old out Breckenridge road somehow mattering to me as the past is like soil, like deep sunken earth that new and old roots grow through to bloom.

A wound in the soil can suffocate new life, and so even with the death of a simple plant, like human trauma the land can share, as Cathy Caruth has written, the "story of a wound that cried out […and] cannot be linked only to what is known, but also to what remains unknown" (4). To what is buried in the earth, what is expressed and suppressed, what is blooming and dying.

So maybe I still carry the losses and struggles and heartache of ancestors inside of me. Maybe we all do. And maybe that is what I'm trying to give voice to. But not only that. If a wound can speak in silence across generations, so can the strength it took to survive and the strength left in the ground, in the uncanny roots we connect to.

❖

We were talking about Breckenridge church and how Mary thinks it is getting too contemporary, about fried chicken livers at the Worley family reunion, and about the alarm clock she had that beeps 13 times when Mary blurted out, "You know Uncle Minor and Aunt Elise had that son that was killed. Shot by his cousin, on accident."

Mary watched our faces as we sat quietly for a moment listening to her clock tick and her tiny dog squirm on her lap.

"It was horrible," she said.

I stopped writing and turned my phone's recorder toward Mary so I could stop taking notes and just listen.

"Aunt Hattie's boys had been shooting, target practice, and Minor's son, Glendon, was with' em," Mary began, "and they were going to put the rifle up, but you know boys. They decided they were gonna target practice and Glendon run to change the target and Hattie's boy, Eugene, got anxious or somethin' and shot him. Killed him."

"Shhhhhhoooo," my Dad pushed out, shaking his head.

"You know Aunt Elise never got over that, but she never said a thing about Eugene or Aunt Hattie."

What do you say to that? I thought.

"They say you could hear Aunt Elise screaming, and that she heard the shot," Mary almost whispered to me as I imagine they whispered then. Saying to each other, *there, she's the one whose boy got shot. Got killed by his cousin… and there, that's the boy, that's the boy who shot his cousin— killed him, he's the one.*

They brought Glendon to his mother's porch covered in blood where he died in her arms, thirteen years old.

“Aunt Elise said she never walked out on that porch again that she didn’t see the blood,” Mary said as the room got silent.

“But I guess things were harder then,” she added.

Yes, but not that, I thought. Not just that. Harder times, yes, different and yet familiar. Something almost *uncanny* about their pain.

Tragedy is marked in each family differently, usually by some event that all pain is measured against, and then as now it is too often related to the death of a child.

The death of a child, of a thirteen-year-old boy, I don’t think it can really be dealt with, just lived through, fought against, which is the core of its trauma, as that pain “returns to haunt the victim [because of …] the reality of the way its violence has not yet been fully known” (Caruth 6). As trauma is more than “violent events” but repeated as a “shocking and unexpected occurrence of an accident” (6).

“Uncle Minor broke the stock off that shot gun,” Mary said, “broke it right off and said ‘nobody else that’ll happen to.’”

“Nobody else that’ll happen to,” you said, but you must have known otherwise. Because there are always guns, and sickness, always rivers and ponds to drown in, horses to be thrown from, or famine to suffer through, because you can’t childproof the world or undo nightmares.

You can’t make yourself forget.

Why did it happen to him? When will I stop seeing the blood? How long am I supposed to hurt? How long, how long?

Caruth defines trauma as the "oscillation between the crisis of death" and the "crisis of life," (7) which on a printed page makes me nod and highlight the sentence. But sometimes I think we try to theorize grief and explain pain too much. The "oscillation" between "crisis of life and death" doesn't take a dense theoretical or literary application to understand— it's a father trying to live after his son has died. It's a mother, watching dirt fill in over a coffin, and a cousin who would replay the scene in his mind over and over, for the rest of his life.

I hear Mary, but I see Minor and watch, watch that big voiced man made breathless by the breathlessness of his son, and his name, Glendon stands out as I walk through the cemetery. I will never look at that tombstone the same way again.

You're supposed to be dead but you weren't supposed to die, and I pray, *please Lord, protect my family.*

❖

We were both confused why the other was there. On recommendation from Mr. Dickinson, I had agreed and asked to interview a historian that I'll call Mr. G, but the overlap Dickinson saw in our work did not transfer to our meeting with each other.

Mr. G and I had only communicated via email where I had tried to explain my project and had even attached my preliminary prospectus— one he clearly did not read.

I am exploring the women and young farmers left behind during the Civil War (in the Western Virginia area that would become West Virginia area) and how their experiencing hardship at home then transcended beyond their generation since the stories I have

are a good deal after the war. Since I am writing a creative nonfiction piece one of the main goals of the research process is to understand the time, place, and people closest to the family members I am writing about.

"Are you with the History or English department?" he asked me, leaning back in the chair across from mine and staring out the window.

"English. I proposed a creative nonfiction piece using the Blake Archive."

Mr. G was familiar with the Blake Scholarship, offered to one History or English master's student, and he, a history alumni had polite but obvious bias.

"So, is this, is this like historical fiction?" he asked, not quite rolling his eyes.

"No," I said.

"I write creative *nonfiction* which just means I use the entire scope of literary devices and language to explore truth. I don't make things up. I do admit speculation, but the research is to support things I have to 'perhaps.'"

"Oh well, see I'm not a writer. I mean I've written historical books, but I just use the facts."

Something is always left out while something else is recorded (Trouillot 49).

"How do you navigate nostalgia and speculation's role in historical research though? And what do you think sentimental and idealized narratives can share about the realities of the times they narrate?" I asked.

“I’m not sure I know what you mean,” he said, leaning forward and pressing his lips together.

“Well, as you know, after the Civil War there was a massive surge of sentimental literature and even educational materials romanticizing both the war and the old South,” I said trying to ignore his bored, and condescending expressions, “and while literature like *Gone With the Wind,* or *Little Women* shouldn’t be someone’s basis for the historic realities of the time they narrate, they do share realities about the time and culture of when they were written.”

We were both silent.

“Yeah, maybe, I guess so. I’m not really the person to speak on that. I just use the facts” he said as I put an X by the question.

“Well how do you balance the inherent creative process in historical documents then?” I asked.

“I just use the facts,” he said again looking out the window.

Hard facts are more frightening than darkness… we all need histories that no history book can tell, but they are not in the classroom--not the history classrooms, anyway […] in what is left of history when we close the history books with their verifiable facts (Trouillot 71-2).

“Well, I understand you may stick to primary sources but even in historian’s introductions, diaries, and letters there is an admission that these sources were shaped. I mean they were created by people, people who often knew their writing would be read and recorded and chose a version of events, who created a story of their history,” I said.

“Well, I mean, yeah. You take primary sources and extract, but stick to dates and facts, put into context.”

The naming of a fact is itself a narrative of power disguised as innocence (Trouillot 114).

I smiled and asked the rest of my questions taking very few notes. What a sad and dead little world to research and explore.

❖

My head started to itch when Carol mentioned bed bugs again. Like Mary, Carol is somehow connected to Minor Worley’s family and still calls Bolt home.

“You know last time you came to talk to me right after you left we had the biggest fuss with bed bugs, took months to get rid of all of them, had our stuff in bags for months, hope they’re gone now,” she said.

I am not a clean freak, nor am I a snob who thinks there is anything about me that makes me better than Carol; and yet, I just couldn’t stand her house, the smell and the clutter everywhere. My notebook sat on a cleared off section of her kitchen table with empty pill bottles and glass figurines around it. I could see bottles of tobacco spit and newspapers stacked in the corners.

I felt like there was something in the mess pushing me away, saying, “you don’t belong here,” “you don’t know these people,” and because of that, because of your decorated apartment, J Crew sweater, and private education “ you can’t listen to what you came here to ask.”

My Dad dunked an Oreo cookie into coal black coffee as Carol updated us on the family we were never very in touch with or a part of.

Carol, in her house coat with her hands on her walker is why we come. Carol, with her gray curled hair and bright eyes that perk up before sharing a ‘good ol’ tale’ about the family is why we come. Why I ignore the trash and dust, hospital pads, and broken furniture. She is all I have to link with a past that is mine and not. She is why I whisper to myself, “I belong here, I belong here, these stories are mine.”

The first time I went to Bolt, she welcomed me in like I was family, which I guess distantly I am, even if I am still unsure how, and even if I didn’t see her that way. The distance didn’t seem to matter to her as she told the holler lookout caller, and the neighbor who stopped by to check in “this is one of Jane’s granddaughters, a Canterbury.” And she told me about my grandparents, told me about Dallie and Minor, about this family I never knew was waiting for me like she knew how and why it would come to matter.

“You see out that window?” Carol asked, and then motioned for my Dad and me to get up and look.

“That’s Uncle Minor’s farm.”

I looked out the large rectangular window that Carol told me is trimmed with wormy chestnut wood from the old Bolt school house and follow the many streams and narrow gravel roads no cars are passing on.

I could see out to mountains and powerline marked hills, out to wildflower and weed filled meadows, out to new homes and rotting wood, out to what Carol loves, Bolt.

After we talked about Dallie and Minor, about Tom and Jane, and my Dad as a baby I asked Carol about Sophia and Nathan. If anyone would know about them, it would be her.

Carol stopped eating her pimento cheese sandwich and shook her head, "see I don't know much about them. You know, Nathan died long before Sophia, and she raised those kids, had a hard time too, ya know. He built that Homeplace and then went off and died."

Carol said "went off and died" like Nathan had a choice. She made it seem like he wasn't strong enough, not that he didn't care, but that maybe it was easier to die than to fight.

"Do you know why they came here?" I asked.

"Well, really no. They say Nathan traded a farm in Virginia for the land here, and I think his brother came with him, so I don't know if they made the trade together. I think his brother, Harrison Worley married one of Sophia's sisters, but I don't even remember if that's a true memory."

"You don't remember Minor or Dallie ever talking about their mom then? About growing up? They never talked about what she was like? Or what growing up was like?" I asked.

"Well, now yeah. Some. They say that Sophia was tough. Boy, she'd have to be, all those kids, and that they was poor, but that she kept that farm going."

I wrote along with Carol: *worked hard as a man, times was hard,* and *there in that Homeplace.*

"You know," Carol began again as I wondered if I should correct her, *no, I don't know*.

"They raised pigs and cows and they never ate a bite of em'. Sold em' and I believe I remember Minor saying that Sophia would pack their lunches for the farm with a thick layer of pumpkin butter spread between bread and that other kids would call out, *I smell pumpkin, must be a Worley."*

My Dad picked up one of my pens and scratched out pumpkin butter in the top corner with a star. Later, in the car he said, "I wrote that down because that shows how poor they were. Showed they only had pumpkin butter."

I smell pumpkin, must be a Worley.

❖

My uncle sketched the old Homeplace out for me a few years ago. Together with my Dad and aunt, they circled together and delved deep in memory to make the farmhouse real again on bleached paper lines. And if I stare at the sketch of the Homeplace too long, the lines from the notebook paper start to blur and the outline of the house raises up. And if I stare so long that the ink fades then I'm inside, in my own floating imagined reality that like everyone else who visited starts at the side door, the one that leads into the kitchen.

There, in the kitchen, I can see the farmhouse sink with its water pump pouring spring water cold through the spigot, and occasionally, a salamander along with it. I feel the flour sack lined walls and the cast iron cook stove where thousands of meals were made. I can almost sit at

the table, at the large wooden table with chunky- sturdy- chairs and feel myself reach for a biscuit before passing a bowl of green beans.

The wood creaks as I walk from the kitchen into the living room as I imagine from the blurred lines of paper, and I go into the living room with worn furniture, the one that in later years would have a single light bulb installed. I go toward the corner of the room and open the closet door because I know behind it, I can see the outside cabin beams that were left uncovered.

Then I see the narrow and nowhere-near-code staircase pulling me up each step and across the many uneven landings toward the past.

I can see the bedrooms upstairs with hand stitched quilts on each bed and a few knickknacks, combs, or brushes on nightstands and dressers. This is where the siblings would come together, creeping into each other's rooms on nights they were scared from the reality around them or from a bad dream. Maybe whispering to each other, *I know you miss Dad, sssshhhhh though, don't cry. Don't want Momma to hear, don't want her to cry now too?*

It's said Sophia kept a black snake upstairs in the attic or somewhere in the house's many closets, placed in the home to help with mice. And I think of my fear of snakes and her kind of life where a black snake could be kept like a cat, where its roaming and presence was natural and welcome, and that all seems so unknown. I venture back downstairs, this time in what is known as the front section of the Homeplace which Nathan built but didn't get to enjoy long, built for more rooms but also as a small luxury for his growing family and his faithful wife.

From the bottom of the staircase I can see the catalogue ordered wallpaper of the parlor and the pump organ my Grandma Jane taught herself to play. I can see the small landing of steps

that leads back to the original section of the house— all so imperfectly stacked and leveled, step upon step like a child's tilting tower of blocks, each level added without a plan, the way we often assemble our lives. Walking past the organ takes me into the "formal" front hall that adjoins more bedrooms and leads out the humble front door onto the large covered porch.

Out on the porch a pine tree is planted on either side of the steps leading down where they looked out to the farm, to the hills, and toward the row of Maples—some still standing, and all with their roots.

I stare at my paper sketched version and can see the shadow of the pen in my hand, not the shadows of the homeplace. Not the shapes and stories cast on the walls and floors as the sun sets and rises, but shadows still.

❖

I had never used a microfilm machine before but loved how official using it made me feel. Loved the challenge of focusing the lens and scrolling through the film of dated county records. Loved the ever-created connection to a time, place, and people I really don't know.

The looped and faded cursive of 1880's Trap Hill District, Bolt West Virginia census records are sadly listed in no sort of order. Thankfully, I had studied the Bolt Old Testament of names so that even in the entries I didn't know I could make connections from the tombstones and stories still of Bolt.

I smiled, smiled alone at a microfilm machine when I read, Nathan Worley: farmer, wife, Sophia J. Worley: homemaker, and the names of their children I had memorized by then. But I

smiled even more at the 1900 census record. In 1900, Nathan had died and Sophia is listed as Sophia J. Worley, occupation: farmer. Listed with 10 kids who had "attended school within the year," listed as owning land, listed as mortgage free, and listed as a farmer.

Such a small detail that opens up questions of story. What did she do that morning? Was she making pork fat biscuits with touches of flour on her apron and face?

Maybe not. But maybe.

Maybe, the apron hung in the kitchen on the day of the census— they weren't mailed out then and I think whether the county workers traveled farm to farm or whether she rode or walked into town she left it at home as she proudly listed her ten children's full names still living at home and how they all attended school within the year, able to read, write, and speak English.

The apron must have hung in the kitchen on the days she plowed. There in the field where she and twelve-year-old Lacey, eleven-year-old Minor, and nine-year-old Dallie hitched the plow to the mules early in the morning, sweated under the summer sun, and sat together to enjoy the shade of a maple at lunch.

I think Sophia left the apron at home when she answered, "farmer" as her occupation, not homemaker like when Nathan was alive, and proudly checked the boxes: "owns farm," and "free of mortgage."

I think she left the apron at home the day Nathan died, at least in her mind, as it no longer mattered what mess others might see on her simple house dress. *Let em' see the mess. Let em see*

the flour on me, see the dirt from the plow, smell the sweat of my work and the coals from the wood stove.

❖

Sophia Jane,

At birth we are 136 years apart and that seems like it should separate us by worlds, or something far greater than five generations. I want to imagine that I know what you were like and why knowing you would matter to me. I want to imagine I understand how you felt the day Nathan died and how you might have sat in the Homeplace. I want to think you tried to just carry on and ignore it because of what I assume to know of the rationale of your upbringing. You'd seen war and reconstruction and so much death. It would make sense for you to not miss a beat. To gather the family, prepare the body, feed the baby, bury Nathan, and carry on.

I don't know if you tried to handle it like I would—or like the authors of history tell me you would—with a bold and lying calm face in front of others, only to fall apart late at night, on a lonely mattress, in a quiet house. To crumble when you feel even the absence of your shadow in the infant hours of morning. Were you haunted by the false perception of your own strength?

I imagine you there, and then your baby cries and you pick her up in the darkness, rocking, saying *please, stop, please, shhhhh*, but not to her, to yourself.

Sophia, even though you tried to protect them from hunger and hurt you must have hated when they heard the same things you had, the taunts reserved for the poor, *"I smell pumpkin so here comes a Worley."*

Didn't you hate it? Didn't you brag about your land, didn't you ever want to sell it? Or could you brush it off, whispering to yourself, *let em' say what they want. I own my farm. Nathan left no money, but he left our land. Left it to me, and I will guard it. Tend it. Keep it alive. Keep it safe.*

I see you in the morning rubbing your puffy eyes as you light the stove in your flour-sack kitchen. See you open the stove door to toss in kindling and blow down into the coals to spark the fire again. See you walking through the fields, bailing hay, and feeding the babies, all while you wait for darkness so you can cry again.

Waiting for everyone else to fall asleep, watching the candle beside your bed dance in the darkness—as it casts light and creating shadows around you. You blow out the candle but still watch the place where its flame once was, where its smoke now circles around your bed even in absence of its light.

I hear your muffled breathing—out through your nose, and broken through your mouth, as your body tightens against grief.

Sophia, I cry in the darkness too. Sometimes. And then like you get up the next morning not knowing if I am strong enough.

Sophia, the shadows of your strength still dance around your memory. With what little is left, that was remembered of you. And I care about it, about strength and this place, about fire and smoke.

DOLL HOUSE GAMES

My Mawmaw made me a blue Victorian style doll house that I filled with delicate furniture scaled perfectly to size. It had white trim with an ornate front porch and purple wallpaper she carefully hung inside. There were four rooms I'd switch around, even though moving the kitchen upstairs never made sense. Around the same time, my brother, Joshua, got a Breyer horse toy truck and trailer with figures that were only a little too big for the doll house, but we didn't care. We'd take the doll house in his room and set it next to the barn that Pawpaw built him, or he'd drive his truck into my room and we'd "unload" the trailer and set up our game.

Joshua always fixed the roof when we played, that's what I remember, which he has both admitted to and denied. There would be a big storm or fire coming and his brown hair shiny faced character would hang on the roof pounding fake shingles into the doll house, risking life and livelihood to save me.

It seems odd, but even then, we knew sometimes we played better than others. On those nights, when Mom would tell us it was time to get ready for bed we'd both beg to play on, and she usually let us, at least for a while, because you can't go back and we knew that. She knew that, somehow.

"We'll play first thing in the morning," we'd say, promising each other it would be just as good, but it wasn't. It was like each day we grew up a little bit more and knew that if we stopped, we'd have fun again, but not in the same way.

Of course, that's not what we thought, not what we said then, but I think we could feel it. Feel that *this time is special*, even if we don't know why. *This time is special because it is part of you and part of me*—this moment in time when rules don't really hurt us, and we're not afraid of the future because we can't imagine anything else.

I think part of me still operates like the child who knew the games I played could still be fun the next day, but never the same, yet still tried to start off where I left. Thinking, *yesterday was so fun, can't I play like that again?* But the chalkboard is gone from the playroom, the kaleidoscope lost, and the doll house covered in dust. And even if they weren't it wouldn't be the same; we wouldn't see the same picture again, but we might—just might remember together and in those moments share with each other why it mattered and what we think it means.

It means I belong.

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APPENDIX A

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY.
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Office of Research Integrity

January 29, 2019

Sarah Canterbury
3719 Four Pole Road
Huntington, WV 25701

Dear Ms. Canterbury:

This letter is in response to the submitted thesis abstract entitled *"Adventures from Four Pole Creek."* After assessing the abstract, it has been deemed not to be human subject research and therefore exempt from oversight of the Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Code of Federal Regulations (45CFR46) has set forth the criteria utilized in making this determination. Since the information in this study does not involve human subjects as defined in the above referenced instruction, it is not considered human subject research. If there are any changes to the abstract you provided then you would need to resubmit that information to the Office of Research Integrity for review and a determination.

I appreciate your willingness to submit the abstract for determination. Please feel free to contact the Office of Research Integrity if you have any questions regarding future protocols that may require IRB review.

Sincerely,

Bruce F. Day, ThD, CIP
Director