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Dry and Yellow

Jamey Genna

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JAMEY GENNA

Dry and Yellow

Lee and I were in town and we were at the top of the hill right before it scoops down into Akron and we weren't supposed to be together but we were. We were riding the dream box into town, down the long hill of dry grasses into town.

We went to Lee's parents' house. I knew they didn't live there anymore, but I didn't care. I rode the box right through the sliding glass doors which may have been open and into somebody's living room.

I started to explain that I just wanted to see the old house...the house of my ex-in-laws...but the owner sitting in the living room didn't seem to care, so I looked around. The rooms were the same—they were square and had bumpy dry white walls. The carpet was the same, a flat brown with a pattern of yellowish diamonds and speckles...the counter was in the kitchen and it was still there, too, jutting out with those early American brown barstools lined up against it, and it was then I remembered all the drinks we'd had at that counter. All the times we'd gone over to Lee's house and had a drink with his parents over this counter. How his mother had always said, "Come on in, Blaire, and have a drink." How she always grabbed my face softly and kissed me, so happy to have the attention. I remembered how I used to drag Lee over there and get him to say hi to his mother and how I stayed and talked with her awhile. She liked to play solitaire and radio bingo to keep herself busy and she cooked all the time. She made the best apple pies and Lee used to bug me to get her recipe, but I knew you could never replace a mother's apple pie with one that was better. I remembered how it felt to hang on that counter and have a drink and talk and then take off and go somewhere and I remembered just for a second what it felt like to be married again. What it was like before I wasn't.

I hadn't divorced just Lee, I'd left her behind and hadn't wanted to maintain a relationship with her because of Lee's new wife. And because it hurt to see his new life sitting on his mother's mantel.

What I mean to say is that his mother must've loved me, too, and she didn't get any explanation. Just like my mom, saying, "I

loved him. But you don't suppose he'd ever stop by or call if he was in town."

And I said, "No, Mom, I don't suppose he would."

Then Lee and I jumped on our box and rode over to his mother's new place and she was by herself, of course, her husband was off collecting toy trucks, and she was so happy I'd brought Lee to see her and hopeful to see us together, but it was all so strange. He was someone I didn't know anymore, but I felt just like I was twenty again, in the scope of her embrace. Then I went into the bathroom and looked at myself in the mirror and saw my teeth were dry and yellow.