Untitled

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How to Hate the Color Blue

MELANIE LEARY

You write your bad memories in blue ink. Everything that reminds you of that night is scrawled in a neatly lined notebook. Since high school you only use cheap blue pens whose caps you lose or chew through in a week. A sort of neurotic habit that your therapist assures you is perfectly normal after what you’ve been through. Your classmates back then noticed the haphazard way you began to dress, but only a few knew what had really happened. At work, you can’t tear your eyes away from the blue ceiling fan, whirring into a corona of vivid color. It reminds you of the ocean and humid days at the beach just minutes away from home. You haven’t been back since you left five years ago. The crystalline blue of the midday sky is another thing that you’ve come to hate. You feel a swelling nausea at the back of your throat on sunny days when the piercing, pure blue overhead seems to glow behind your eyelids when you blink. It’s jarring, and it brings you back to what happened five years ago at the edge of the woods just outside the church where you were baptized.

His eyes flashed blue in the setting sun as he stood over your shivering, immobile body, shadow looming over your face. He pressed you into the cold grass, his force blurring the distant line of trees against a blue-black sky—the first few evening stars spinning across your vision. You cried and fought, but he was a lot stronger than you. His blue eyes glared down at you, the last light of day a mocking halo around his head. Down the road from your new house, there is a billboard that has a painting of Jesus on it. In a delicate font beneath him it reads, He is our savior. The omniscience of his blue eyes unsettles you every time you drive past. In the summer, the fields beyond the billboard stretch long with rows of blueberries that give Jesus a rippling cloak of brambles speckled with blue diamonds. You turn your head away from his false salvation.

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ZACHARIAH WILLIAMS

I want a hard cider
Please I promise that I won’t
Cry like the last
Time