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Reflecting on a Season of Loss

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Reflecting on a Season of Loss

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THE HEIST

BY ANDREW MILLER

I was an accomplice in a robbery once...or so my father likes to say, as he retells the story in amusement to anyone who will listen. As a teenager, I spent my summers as the only cashier of a small general store in the Adirondacks. The store was filled ceiling high with trinkets and knickknacks that I was sure no one would ever buy, but they did. My sister was a waitress, and my brother washed the dishes for three tiny breakfast tables. We complained about working seven days a week all summer long, but we complained together, to no one.

Anyway, back to the heist. There was a horrible fire at the only other general store in the area and the other owners lost everything. To help, the store we worked in began to raise money by collecting customers' donations and small change for several weeks. And that's when SHE walked in. I like to think it was a “Bonnie and Clyde” type scenario, her and I were meant to be. In reality, it was a random woman that I had never seen before. But that's what they all say, isn't it?

The line for checkout that day was unusually long. Customers were eager to get back home to hang their “Life is Better at the Lake” signs and I was in a rush to get back to sittin' down, doin' nothin', and gettin' paid. My sweet Bonnie came out of nowhere and asked in a somewhat urgent tone “did my dad pick that up yet?!” Not having a clue as to what she was referring to, I thought to myself “well if she can see it, then clearly he did not”, but I replied with a simple “No mam, I don’t think so” and went back to assisting the other customers. She aggressively cut in front of me and in that moment, I became the hardened criminal you see before you today, walking amongst you all. She reached into the donation jar, grabbed as much as she could, threw it all into the bag that I GAVE HER and ran away) and in that moment, I became the hardened criminal you see before you today, walking amongst you all. She

I'd like to say that I hung up the cape and retired from vigilantism that day, but then I wouldn't have caught "The Earring Thief" later that summer. Still, here I am with no detective's pension, waiting for my "Key to the City Ceremony". Meanwhile, my brother continues to harass me about why I didn’t "cut him in on the action.”

REFLECTING ON A SEASON OF LOSS

BY BRINDA RAVAL

Two men in my family used to sit across from each other in the living room They would trade quips and push each other’s limits All us bystanders would chuckle, roll our eyes, slyly ask lest we be pulled in Today, both those men hang as portraits in the “living” room The daily battle of wits has ceased but their presence has never been more palpable Why is it that we can glean the essence of others more strongly in their absence?

Their physical shrouts, the noise of their being The clatter and chaos The sharp words and short tempers The lack of social inhibition Obscures and clashes with the person you love

Distance gives us perspective. Death is the ultimate distance. Death gives us the ultimate perspective. Why does it have to be like that?

My grandfather was so earnest He would beg family, friends, anyone he met at his doctor’s appointments To come “bless” our home It was a sacred thing for him to receive a guest with care He never cared that people would think he cared too much Called too much Pleased with them to take just one more sweet too much

Why am I so worried about being “too much” for people? Because all the love in the world squeezed into every minute till it explodes Doesn’t feel like enough the moment they’re gone Who sets the threshold for “this is enough”?

Don’t miss the chance to cherish people In all their complexities when they’re with you In death, the essence of who they were becomes so clear Who sets the threshold for “this is enough”?

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