A Heart Beating Hard
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tongue up and over and down and around Lucy’s skin. Trying to find a place, a way, into Lucy. She watched Lucy put her fingers into the boy’s hair and she watched how Lucy held the boy’s head in her hands. Margie looked at Lucy and Lucy smiled and looked at Margie and her blue eyes looked far away and gray like the clouds above them, like the dusty field around them. Margie watched Lucy, thin, beautiful, tangle-haired Lucy, move the boy’s head slowly over her body.

As if Lucy knew where she wanted him to go.
As if Lucy had done this before.
As if we were not watching.
Wide-eyed, wanting.

Margie watched until the rain, for sure, had started. She watched until she saw Lucy close her eyes and go somewhere else. Margie watched for as long as she could, until the water dripped heavy down from her hair into her eyes, until the shape of the boy and the shape of Lucy became the same big, blurred shape. And then Margie turned away from Lucy, away from that twisting shape of them and the sounds their bodies made. Margie turned away and Margie, eyes-down, walked slow and wet and quiet toward home.

51. MARGE

Your ma’s gone, Marge.
You know I don’t know where.
 Probably out fucking some asshole. Making him fish sticks and buying his beer.
 Just kidding, Marge.
Your ma knows who’s boss.
Who cares where she is? Maybe this time she won’t come back.
Then we can live just us, Marge.
That old bag won’t last much longer. Maybe your ma’s run away and it’ll just be me and you and your pretty friend.
I like her hair, Marge. That friend of yours.
Why don’t you do your hair like hers?
I like her jeans too. She’s a tease, that little one.
Still won’t tell me her name, will you, Marge?
You like making me guess.
You got some of that tease in you, too.
Why won’t you introduce me to your friend, Marge?
I just want to tell her how pretty she is.
Are you ashamed, Marge?
Are you ashamed of me?
Are you?
Say so.
Say you aren’t ashamed.
We’re family, Marge.
We got to take care of each other.

52. MARJORIE

Gone, Marjorie.
Gone where? I want to see Lucy, Dr. Goodwin.
She was born dead, Marjorie. She was cremated.
Where is Lucy, Dr. Goodwin?
I don’t know, Marjorie. I just know that the baby’s body was cremated.
Marjorie?
What happened?
What made you think about the baby all of a sudden?
Not all of a sudden.
Always thinking,
Did something happen to make you think about the past?
I think about the past, Dr. Goodwin.
All the time I think about the past. Not all of a sudden.
I’m sorry if I angered you, Marjorie.
My angry is just angry. Here it is.
I think it’s good for you to express your anger.
They burned Lucy up? Like Ma?
Yes, Marjorie. The baby was cremated.
And nobody asked me.
People did ask you, Marjorie. You were in the hospital. They called me to come and help. There were papers for you to sign and we talked about what would happen to the baby’s body. Do you remember that?
No, Dr. Goodwin. I don’t remember that. I don’t remember any papers.
It was a very stressful time for you. Sometimes when bad things happen our minds shut down. We don’t remember as a way to protect ourselves. What do you remember from that time?
Do you remember talking to the police?