On special occasions, Mars and I would walk all the way to Lake Michigan. It couldn’t console us like the ocean, but it was the biggest thing around, and we needed something really big once in a while to lean against.

Mars wore her man clothes and I linked my arm through hers and we’d head across Chicago toward the lake. *East!* we’d say, setting out on the same foot, reminiscing, delighting in the sounds of our New York voices.

*Tawk to me,* she’d say.
*Cawfee,* I’d say.
*Fuckin’ A!*
*There’s a moon here too,* I’d say, trying for assimilation. *Look!*
*Sure—but it rose from the Atlantic,* she’d say back.
*Mmm. I miss salt!*
And the truth of our situation—that tricky displacement, that prairie-flat reality—would make us stop and hug right there on Montrose.

We’d once walked all the way from Harlem to the Brooklyn Bridge on a summer night soon after our commitment ceremony. I’d insisted Mars wait until we were halfway across the bridge before we stopped and turned to see the shock of Manhattan’s lights strung chaotically from tower to dock.

I’d wanted to hear her breath catch in her throat then see it blossom into a big Brooklyn grin.