

stone-hearted riders. He never cracked, never paused; his throat was steel.

I don't know where he was going; with reluctance, I disembarked at Commercial, but I always blew him a theatrical kiss to show my boundless appreciation for adding magic to my commute. My stop always came too soon, and next Tuesday afternoon couldn't come soon enough.

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When morning comes, I follow the river north: under the tracks, past the dried cattail stalks, and over to the pond shaped like a human heart. At the inlet where the swans flock, a hill ushers me up toward the white sky and then, quietly, west. I keep running, and when the dirt roads reach out to meet me like an open hand, I grab hold.

Farther along still there is a field, and past the field there is a road that bends like a knee. This morning, this road is stirring with the violent beginnings of spring. The branch of a tall tree snaps—and then falls. Wild turkeys ravage the

thickets, and in the wake of the thaw, the full earth heaves and lurches.

At the bend, smoke drifts toward me from the woods, and I slow. I breathe in, then again, as if maybe, if I inhale deeply enough, the particulars of a childhood memory, suddenly recalled, will come back to me.

But already the road is rolling back down, and it becomes all but impossible not to pick up the lost rhythm. So I do—and that's all it takes. A second later I am grinning—no, worse, *laughing!*—giddy with delight at having rediscovered my own ability to move, to say nothing of my own ridiculousness. Only when the road flattens like a surprise do I realize I am back at the river.

I follow it east this time, hugging the thin shoulder of the adjacent road. At the bridge, I pass a fisherman sitting in a blue rowboat. Sitting and waiting, it appears. But the river is so still I think he must already know. About how joy is enough. About how, sometimes, we must reteach ourselves how to pray.

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