

CREATIVE NON-FICTION: SECOND PLACE

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Untitled

My entire life I've counted the years in seasons. How many winters, autumns, springs, and summers it takes to make up my being. Each season held a particular feeling, memories dancing across the changing leaves. Autumn makes me feel the warmest inside, a personal favorite. Though summer will always have a special place. My summer memories are where he lives. Sun kissed skin and shining white teeth. Salt air and a cool breeze. A place that can only be visited now in my dreams.

I was 7 the first time we met. His crooked teeth and bright green eyes seemed inviting even as young as I was. Ethan was the son of my family's friends. I thought he was perfect. That first summer I remember feeling loud for the first time. I was always quiet at school, a bookish sort of smart, never one for meaningless conversations. But he brought that out of me. Ethan never stopped talking, still doesn't if the stories I hear are true. He seemed larger than life. Larger than the small town I grew up in at least. His northern quick way of speaking was alien to me. Interesting in a way boys I knew never were. When he left that summer I sat on the sandy porch of the house and cried. Cried because he was gone. Cried because soon we would be gone. Away from the place I was finally feeling brave in.

I didn't see him again until I was 12. When I finally stepped foot back in that house I was gangly limbed and taller than I had ever been. My curly hair falling out of my ponytail as I jumped into his arms and laughed giddily. My summers continued like this for the next four years. Seeing him one week every summer. Becoming inseparable and deciding I loved him. Though good things don't always last, especially not when you're a teenager balancing your

sanity on a boy you only see during the warmest times. We talked outside of the little haven we had built of course, long phone calls I spent spinning around my room and falling asleep listening to him breathe. Though it's not quite the same is it? Only seeing the good times for someone?

The summer before last we were close in a way we had never been. Attached at the hip and blushing into each other's necks. I thought this would finally be the summer. The summer we stop tiptoeing around the fact that there is something there that is not friendship. Something there that had been brewing since the moment he put his boney 8 year old elbow around my shoulders and smacked a too wet kiss on my forehead. He wasn't all I thought about for sure, but he was there. Prominent and overbearing and I knew that I was that for him too. I wanted him to tell me such but he didn't. He plays like a child, pretends his actions have no underlying meaning and when I finally feel that I'm going to burst out of my skin with it I let the words drop from my lips and we freeze.

A moment that had been so perfect now forever stained in time. Dancing on the porch, it's the last night. I want him to follow me home. Just for a few weeks. It's in his schedule I know that he will. My forehead is pressed into his chest and I tilt my head up to see him looking at me. Before I can think I say it. Stupidly and oh so teenage I tell him that I love him. It is at this moment I learn about Julia. And I hate him. I shout something I regret when I can't sleep at night and he says something back that makes me sick inside. I told him that he knew what he had been doing and he looked at the ground and I heard it under his breath. "I did."

Ethan didn't come to the beach house last summer. I am unsure if he will ever return and I am learning to be okay with that. I cannot find it within myself to blame him, but maybe one day I will. I am only 16.