

*Suzanne Schatzle*

How did I lose it? where did it go? why did I need it? .....When I was in my early twenties, I felt like I was losing my mind VERY prematurely. I felt like the future Alzheimer's patient I'm most likely to be (based on genetics, stress and a general need to reach negative milestones which I assume will still hold true for me when I'm 70 plus), but anyway, I was constantly frustrated as I was constantly losing things. Where did my tape recorder go? I mean it's as big as a squashed shoe box, and how else am I supposed to check out the one recording I made and press play and say "God is that REALLY my voice? That doesn't sound like me!" (side note the idea of you not sounding like you or me not sounding like me is an impossibility no?)...and where in God's name is the only shirt I own that makes me look and feel like I'm the 4<sup>th</sup> Charlie's Angel? ....and then...the ball rolled and I looked under my plotting sister's bed to retrieve it, and THAT IS WHERE I LOST IT! Bitch was stealin my shit! .....Yet I left them there...

[-revealingly yours, Clementine]

*Belle Hann*

She never expected to lose her virginity in a classroom. Afterwards, she wanted to ask her friends if she looked different. She yearned for the brief elevation of status, of being someone who had “done it.” She had been on the periphery of her peer group, unable to keep up with their rough talk and innuendo. It was on the tip of her tongue to tell someone, to blurt it out.

Yet, he insisted that they tell nobody. Before he left the classroom, he looked both ways out the door, as if he were leaving the scene of a crime, and indeed, he was leaving the scene of a crime: she had only reached her fifteenth birthday a week ago. He told himself that she was mature for her age. He told himself they both wanted this. But afterwards, he was terribly confused. Sex had sobered him up, cleared his brain. He lost all desire to see her again.

The next day, he taught geography to his ninth grade class. She was his pupil again. She sat in the front row, drawing hearts on her textbook. He refused to catch her eye.

## THIS IS WHERE I LOST IT

*James Garber*

I search throughout the house, turn every piece of furniture upside down and inside out, empty out the refrigerator, look under all the beds, even look inside the piano. . .

I know where I put it! It must be in my sock drawer under that pair of argyles my uncle Pete gave me when I was 16. I never wore them, but they still smell like the pipe tobacco, that cheap cherry---flavored kind he used to smoke.

He was my dad's brother and a mean drunk when under the influence. I used to make myself scarce whenever they pulled out the Canadian Club and those cut---crystal glasses with the company name on them.

But when he was sober, strangely enough, he was kindly. I loved watching him in his woodshop, sanding smooth the planks of walnut and maple and joining them to make shelves and cabinets. When I got old enough to work the table saw and the drill press, he would guide me on my own projects. I can still smell the sawdust and almost feel the wood oils on my hands, even now . . .

. . . but, where was I? What was it I was looking for?

## LOSING IT

*Courtney Hayden*

The woman directly in front of me in the audience has Wise Potato Chip owl eyebrows. The Rolling Stones “Under My Thumb” contains a judicious use of xylophone. Train schedules are impossible to read. There is a last time for everything even if you don’t realize at the time that it is the last time. This dais is slippery. It is a good thing I’m wearing Terragrab™ shoes with sticky soles. Terragrab™ high heel shoes are both comfortable and stylish. I can hear my heart beating in my ears.

Over one-hundred suited humans are sitting in this room. That is over two-hundred eyes pointed at me. Waiting. My palms are moist or maybe damp. Isn’t it funny how both *moist* and *damp* sound like the thing they describe? It is funny. Everything will be fine if you try your hardest. I am trying my hardest.

Sweat bleeds through paper. *Upstream, socialize, parallel paradigm, touch base, circle up, level set*, and oh my God these are not even real words. My lips are parting. A tide of inhale empties sound from the cavern of my mouth. My voice escapes me.

## MATCH POINT

*Cassie Cartaginese*

Jenna wipes her sweaty face with a towel, painfully aware that all eyes are watching her. She'd just lost the high school state championship tennis match. But as her eyes scan the crowd of disappointed spectators, she knows she hasn't just lost the championship. She's lost everything.

Her mother gives her a reassuring wave, but there's pity in her glassy green eyes. Coach Vix is standing at the end of the bleachers, her mouth a clenched into a hard, thin line. Her now ex-boyfriend, Adam, is nowhere to be found.

Jenna knows this shouldn't surprise her. But he'd promised to come. He knew how important this match was to her. The again, she was the one who'd broken his heart, saying that she was confused, that she needed time...

She pours the last of her water onto her head, feeling the cool water stream like tributaries down her scalp. Eileen, a fellow teammate, is watching her from the other side of the courts. Her sweaty, auburn hair falls from her ponytail, and her nose scrunches up like a raisin as she flashes Jenna a genuine smile.

A curious sensation flutters in Jenna's insides. Maybe she hasn't lost everything.

## THIS IS WHERE I LOST IT

*Lucinda Abra*

He has threatened to kill me so many times. Nearly did, before we fled. Now, having asked for one last meeting, I drive down I-94, a Detroit thruway, needing to draw him far from our daughter. The car momentarily fills with acrid yellow factory breath that turns the skygod itself into discard. I steer around the rubble of cast off tires that lay everywhere, gutted, along the roadside as if some mad hunter took knife to the Motor City's own. The rusty hulk of abandoned cars dimly glitters this afternoon despite the waning sun that fights through the ruin.

A sleek Eldorado nearly cuts us off. The tinted window is half open. I glance at a semi-automatic resting its mussel as if it too is world-weary.

He drones on while the tires underneath tread on the hot, cracked cement. Can I admit it now? I am not listening. Until he says that if I don't come back, he will jump, right now, from the car. His beautiful fingers clutch the door handle. My mouth in a determined grimace, I step on the accelerator.

"Go ahead and jump."

He will. But not yet.