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The Last Page: Love Story

Lucy Dotson
Colby College

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LOVE STORY

My mother wore glasses, thick and round
as the bottom of a coke bottle, and rosy overalls

my father had a shiny polished helmet
of chestnut hair and dated my mother's older sister

one night in Cold Spring Harbor, he climbed up
the trellis and into the wrong window

and after that, and a stint working at a desk in Vietnam,
he moved into my mother's house

she read Portrait of the Artist and took physics while
he grew a moustache that must have been in style

and they ran a coffee shop in the basement
and installed a Franklin stove that could sear a palm off

and moved to New York City, where one of them
took tickets at the movie theater, and they shopped

for clothes at an Indian import store down the block,
and saw some famous people on the street,

and some regular people who would later become
famous, and had knives waved at them and threw parties

and studied at Hofstra and fixed computers and built
a cherry bookshelf on commission and settled down

in an old wig factory, had a baby and got married,
and on Thanksgiving, they and my mother's parents

my two aunts and their children and boyfriends
and my one uncle each wore a colored wig at dinner

my aunt had all her teeth and was beautiful
my grandmother had not yet found the deer tick

in the soft hairs on the nape of her neck
no one ever wrote on the backs of photos,

or took pictures head on with teeth bared
but these are just pieces that my parents pass

to each other and to their children
like currency, rubbed smooth, from a time

when their darkest potential still crouched in waiting,
before the parade of concessions, and I know

when I look at a photo of my father, the way his lips
are parted, the warm blackness of his eyes, that more

exists, that to love is to drink from a glass
overflowing, and discover that one is capable of anything.

— LUCY DOTSON '13J

