

THE SAME

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Like a caged animal, I saved the best for last. Nobody knows how supportive our troops are. Not until they're gone and brown children miss the guns and gum in front of the candy store. Like a caged animal, I'm too lazy to walk through an open door, too fat to fit. Listen, I saved the best for last. I love you. Who are you? That's a lie, I never loved anyone, least of all myself. If I did, I wouldn't butter my toast. Certainly not with a palette knife. Nevertheless, I love you.



I've forgotten what I smell like. Diesel, wet sidewalk, roasting coffee, these scents tell me I'm home. Don't ask me, don't tell me, I already think I know, even though I don't. I have a bed. I sleep in it, even though I didn't make it. I dream in black and white but also in stereo. I'm losing my hearing. I did not invest it wisely. I forget things if I write them down, so I write a lot. I am Isaiah with the Lost Books. Can you read them to me? My parents picked cotton, had dirt floors and no shoes, ate squirrel and opossum. Now they have oxygen and new corneas and cable TV. Like caged animals, not happy, not sad, they just go on. How do you feel about that? You're wrong. But here's the best, which I've saved, as day follows day. When I was a child, I had a rabbit who died trying to squeeze through a tiny hole in his crate. He knew it was too small, but the world on the other side was so wide. And Bill, dead in his birdcage. Swordtails jumping to the deadly carpet. I let my cats go outside, and they don't always come back.