

What I Lost

By Dean Keller Jacobs

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I lost my first tooth when I was five. I lost a stuffed zebra named Harold when I rode the Ferris wheel with Preacher at the fair. I lost Harold the same month I lost Dad. I lost Dad when Mom yelled Get Out. I lost faith when I was six and God took Mom and Preacher to Cincinnati. I lost faith and got Dad back. I lost my second tooth three days later. I lost Dad's beer money at the fair when I was nine. I lost my best trading cards earning it back. I lost my bike to Jason Harper when I was ten. I lost a tooth when I told Dad. I lost my virginity in sixth grade in the dugout. I lost my virginity three more times before the girls figured me out and stole my box of condoms. I lost Dad to AA later that year. I lost myself in the bottom of his bottles. I lost interest in school. I lost a lot of fights until I lost feeling scared. I lost feeling scared when me and Jason Harper started playing rugby. I lost Dad again when he fell off the wagon. I lost myself to yellow jackets and torpedoes. I lost myself to free-basing. I lost rugby to the habit. I lost the habit when I met Bethany Redding. I lost the habit in my room. I lost the habit while Jason Harper sat with me. I lost myself to the shakes and puking and sweating and swearing and shitting myself. I lost myself to find Bethany. I lost my nerve five times before I asked Bethany out. I lost Bethany when I couldn't tell her I loved her after eighteen months. I lost her three weeks before the prom. I lost myself in the bottle. I lost my first car when Dad drove it through a guardrail and into the Susquehanna. I lost the bottle and got Bethany back. I lost Dad's house paying off his debt. I lost myself in my studies. I lost my old buddies. I lost money applying to college. I lost my waiter job at Olive Garden. I lost my job because I got into college three states away. I lost my nerve and almost didn't go. I lost Bethany again when she died of ovarian cancer at twenty-six. I lost the baby because I lost Bethany. I lost myself in the bottle. I lost her wedding ring playing poker with buddies from my frat. I lost control bad enough to send the guy who won it to the hospital. I lost my job as marketing manager for a grocery. I lost the company too much money. I lost myself on the road. I lost myself on purpose. I lost myself losing myself. I lost the nerve to blow my brains out. I lost perspective, my therapist tells me. I lost what else he said, 'cause I just keep thinking about what all I lost.

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