

Edge of the World

The summer my grandmother was dying my father walked me to a carnival so my mother could sob into the living room carpet. It was the last summer I wore red bib overalls and the red and white sailor shirt—the summer I couldn't quite see past the logic of baseball, so after the Babe Ruth boys took the championship, Toya Nelson and I went looking for them. Toya invited herself everywhere, which my mother found sad, but I just thought she wasn't afraid, and what was sad about that? Her brothers had pounded this into her, liked to string her up in a backyard tree by her feet. We found the team at Jason Raisty's, jerseys damp, bangs stuck to their dirty foreheads. We all sat with our legs touching, watching movies that made you squeeze your knees together, look at your hands. I thought about hook slides. The air outside was big and quiet when we left. I walked her home to her mother's trailer, to sleep curled next to her, her cowlick and crooked jaw, her stubby fingers and coppery skin, her breasts always two years behind mine.