

Remember someone or some place. Simultaneously log issues, problems, pleasures, frustrations, questions raised in and about the writing/remembering process.

There is a spot, a dot I've seen on only one map (Kentucky Waterways), a place where the Little Hickman Creek runs into the Kentucky River. I love this place. I have fallen in and out of love there, in the mingling of waters where I have stood, or swum, or tread, or fought the current – depending on the season of the year or the stage of the relationship. That spot, where the tributary and the river embrace, marks my passage from youth to adulthood.

We used to go to this place when we needed to escape our so-small-in-retrospect world of classes and Mcjobs and youthful woes. Throwing our minor tribulations into the trib as we stripped the day off with our clothes. In the briefest of flirtations with L., I remember him referring to a similar spot as “outer space,” the place where you go when you don't want to be anywhere you are. I don't remember how I found this space, but I'm not surprised by the lacuna. I once knew every back road, old bridge, and barb-wire free swimming spot in a three-county radius from my home.

Maybe M. showed us this one. It certainly

*disclosure. fidelity. purpose.
I've already shut down three
memory writings and mentally
edited this one to shreds. stopped
before starting. is this for me?
for Della? for the class? It
matters, you know – mysterious
“you” from whom I'm writing
this memory.*

*I like writing memory to make a
point; As most of my writing
makes clear, I frequently connect
with concepts through memory.
But I'm a bit baffled here,
treading and dreading the “why”
of the writing. To remember,
remember?*

*I feel like I am cheating, on the
writing or the place, as I'm
remembering water. I'm
exploring for Della and Soyini
simultaneously. But I'm also a
bit amused or pleased at the
emerging metaphor of mingling
and cheating: classes, lovers,
functions, ages, waters. Where
am I? More in the river, or
more in the trib?*

seems like her kind of spot. Follow the highway, so recently widened, for 10 or 15 miles; cross the large every-highway, high-tax-dollar bridge from which you could almost see it if you knew exactly where to look; turn onto the two lane road to the not quite town that you'll pass without noticing, then onto the single lane stretch through hills that remind me of the entry to the Red River Gorge (or will, a few years later, when I first visit it). Getting close now, you'll drive over the mildly frightening, rusty old bridge, hoping that your pre-crossing light flash can be seen at mid-day by any potential oncomer from the opposite direction. But you know you don't really need to worry – you've never seen another car here. Once over the bridge, you'll pull off the road into the worn-down grass, jump out of the car grabbing [keys, towels, drinks, music, drugs, nothing – all depends on the party's membership and prior planning].

With the bridge on our right, we begin to scamper or slide past the thin rows of trees and scruff that shield the southern bank of the Little Hickman from view by (only ever imagined?) passing cars. I can always tell the history of recent rain from these banks. Sometimes the trib rises almost to meet us at the top of the hill, and sometimes we have to climb down rows of river rocks to get to it. It will never be deep enough for a dive on this side – too much slope, and in fall I have stood in the center of the creek with water only up to my waist.

I think spring was my favorite. The water always painfully cold, but deep. Shedding clothes [some or all, again dependent on party], we will

*Should I use people's names?
Again, the audience question. I
don't know why, but I'm feeling
shy with this one.*

*The second person shift – I want
to avoid it, but I can't seem to
give myself directions otherwise.*

*How many places, how many
details am I conflating? What is
"accuracy" in memory? Does it
matter? I'm reminded of Lucy
Grealy, asked repeatedly how she
remembered all those details for
Autobiography of a Face, and
her reply: "I didn't remember it.
I wrote it. I'm a writer." That's
probably a paraphrase, but I'm
quoting from memory, too.*

*Ahh – tense shifts. Like the 2nd
person, seemingly unavoidable.
I remember making active
choices in other memory
writings, but am just feeling
compelled here.*

quickly submerge, ducking heads to adjust homeostasis. I like to let go, to float the short, fleet distance to the river, to my favorite spot of my favorite spot.

It is among the strangest, most transcendent sensations I've ever experienced, to linger in the mingling of waters. Even as one flows into the other, they remain distinct: different pulses of current, different colors and translucency, different smells and tastes. But it's the temperature shift that gets me every time. The Kentucky is always a good 10 degrees warmer than the Little Hickman, and it tickles me or turns me on or shocks me to feel the difference in the suddenly divided planes of my body, my front and back suddenly distinct, and all it takes to exchange their places is to face a different direction. For this, I think I liked fall best, because I could stand in the mingling as the tepid teal of the trib rushed around me to lose itself in the welcoming warm brown of the river.

In late spring and early summer, if I am not careful, I can float to this spot and get sucked into the river's current before I am ready. Once – but only once – the undertow took me far down the river, and I had to kick like hell back to the bank. The walk back up to the trib was the first time I ever felt shame here.

Usually, though, I can swim across the river. The first few times each spring, I have to stop and tread for a while in the middle before flying on to the other side. Crossing the river feels good. It impresses us with ourselves; it impresses me with myself even now, to say that we swam across the

I don't know how to say this. It's so visceral, such a completely embodied moment of memory that even now, seven or eight years since I last was there, I can feel in my stomach the magic of this place. But I could never describe it, not really. I'm nowhere close.

Or 2°. Or 20°. How could I gauge the precision of my skin's thermometer?

"tickles?" not exactly. What is this sensation? What word could describe it?

I'm beginning to worry about narrative coherence. This story doesn't seem to be going anywhere. It's not really a story, though, is it? This memory doesn't seem to be going anywhere.

river. But that's only the spare change, the non-explanatory justification for those who weren't here. Here, there's no question of "why" – the water calls, and we answer.

On the opposite bank of the Kentucky, we like to lounge on the squishy, boggy, dead-leafed bottom, where we can sit while the water laps our shoulders. A. and I, who were trying to decide whether to date, sunburned our shoulders, sitting in the water talking about Nietzsche. Then a Great Blue Heron (one of my favorite birds, always a powerful omen), dropped down and swept up a fish beside us, and we put our words away for our first kiss.

T. and I went to the mingling spot at the height of our friendship, on the cold October night of a lunar eclipse. We skipped the trib altogether on this trip, walked its bank down to the river, stripped, plunged in, and omyjesusgawd it was **cold**. And dark, dark, dark, with the eclipsed moon's small solar halo the only light in the world. Not like the summer nights when so many fireflies made the river banks look lined with hundreds of twinkling Christmas trees, but infinitely better because both trees and lights were alive.

That night, the water level was surprisingly low, and the temperature shockingly low, and the light uncannily low, so we raced across the river and back and rushed out and into clothes and car and shivering laughter at the perfect, wonderful stupidity of that plan. On warm days, on warm nights, we would sometimes lie (to dry) on a pile of logs (fallen trees? abandoned dam?) that jutted out from the bank to hang over the river. You could almost slip

Still hung up on the names thing. Initials are too weird, but I can't bring myself to make up fake names. Why can't I just use theirs? I don't know yet.

Does this anecdote feel unnecessary? To me, to you (dear undecidable reader), to my spot? Am I cluttering up the place / memory by talking about too many events? If I have to share this, should I leave these parts out?

I replaced "frighteningly" with "uncannily." For D., who has now become implicated as reader, though only initial(ly) here.

through the tangle into the water. That's where most of the party sat and watched, not risking the current, the day I couldn't cross and had to walk up beside the river.

S. and I came to my spot on the outs. We knew we were nearing the end, but still trying to escape that conclusion. I knew he would like this place, given our history of outdoor love-making and seeming particular proclivity for bridges. But I was wrong. It was too far to go – not the 20 minute drive it had been from my once-home, but more like an hour from where we lived then (we slept every night almost in sight of the Kentucky River, but a more northern, industrially polluted, unswimmable stretch). On the way here, I got pulled over for speeding. He got pissed because he had an ounce in his pocket and why would I take that kind of chance? (I didn't know).

The road had changed because the bridge was out, and it took forever to find my pull-off parking place coming from the direction that no one ever came from. We staggered out of the car in the now dark, ugly night. The bank of the trib was so sharp from erosion that we couldn't even get to the water. What happened here? What flood or storm had I missed? How could I not have seen it go? I was still willing to try to make the river, but he was pissy and insistent that his favorite spot, closer to home, would have made a better destination. His was a beautiful spot, I admit – I enjoyed looking down from the low mountain we climbed there to the water below (another tributary to the Kentucky: Elkhorn Creek, just 1 mile too short to be called a river itself).

I feel like I'm telling too much. I feel like I'm leaving so much out. Revealing too much, and not saying anything at the same time. And a little embarrassed to reveal so much/little of myself.

Did I ever go back again after that? Before I moved away forever? I can't remember.

But that was not my water, not really. This was. This is. We both felt defeated as we climbed back in the car to head home. We were beginning to realize the end. He didn't love my spot. On that painful drive away, I just kept thinking about the washed-away banks and the water, now inaccessible to me.

*I don't know how to end. Saying
goodbye to my water seems so
hard. not something I want to
do. I'm maintaining a
melancholy suspension~*