

I was four when Daddy killed that man. The yellowed newspaper articles with the peeling tape plastered inside Grandma's family scrapbook don't call me by name, but they say I was four. They say that man tried to hurt me, and Daddy caught him and killed him. That he had a good reason to kill that man and not have to go to jail. That's what they say.

That man lived down the street from us. He'd grown up in this neighborhood, same as Momma and Daddy, but Momma said she didn't know him all that well, they "ran in different circles." Neighbors said after, they "never did trust that boy." Daddy didn't talk about that man at all.

Sometimes I can sort of remember that man. I think he looked at me funny when I would ride by his yard on my training-wheeled bike. Momma had told me I wasn't allowed to ride down there, but I did anyway. He wore cut-off shorts in the summer. I'm pretty sure his hair was red, I remember it that way, anyhow. But hard to know for sure, I was only four.

I wish I could remember that day better. I wish I could make sense of the bits that do flash in my mind from time to time. Broken memories that sometimes wake me up at night. Pieces of a dream I can't quite remember but something about it nags at me all day. The dust in my eyes that made me tear up. Daddy breathing so heavily. The yelling and cursing. The jarring crack of a shovel against skull. The quick silence. The flashing police lights. Momma crying. But there's something else too. Something crouching in the corner, hidden. It's there, I feel it. That nagging dream.