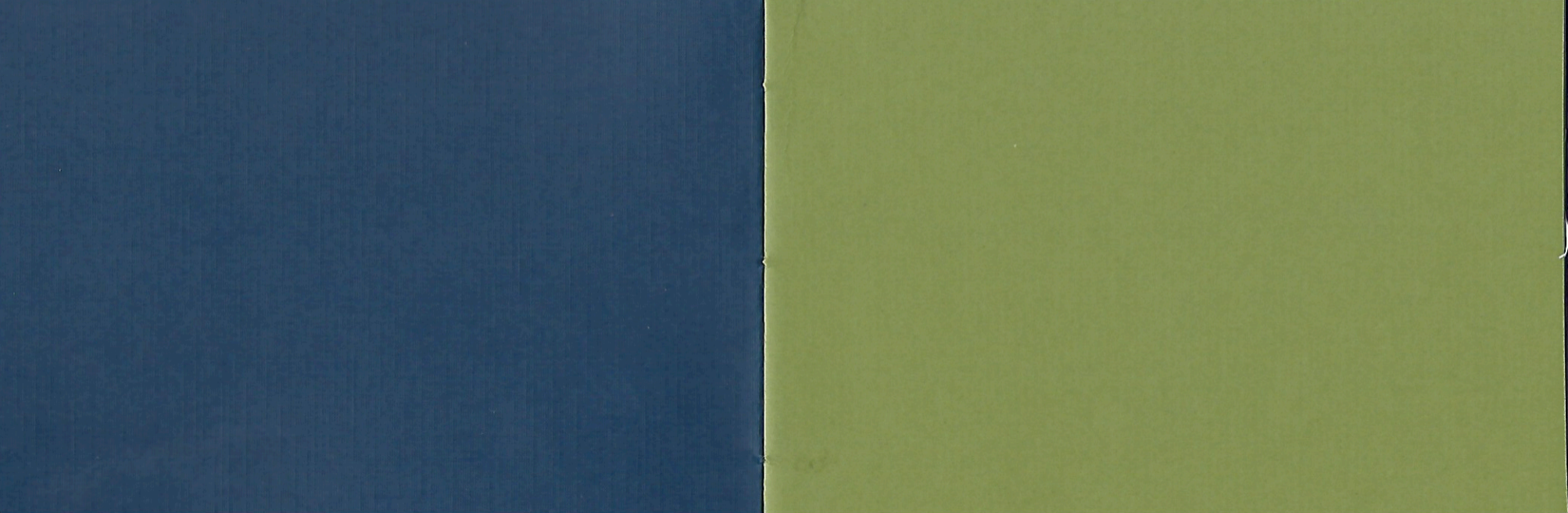


To Begin



This is a story of a man. The light breaks the
lake. He came down to the water. The shore was
stone, and he made his footprints. The fish
swam. It was dark. He raised his arm. A bird
took the sky and brought it home, to weave
into its nest. It was impossible, yet here it was.
You must believe.

To Begin

Jonathan Ball

2006

No

This is not a confession. The light broke the lake. He came across the water. The shore was stone, would not take his footprints. The fish sang. It was cold. He raised his arm. A bird took the sky and brought it home, to weave into its nest. It was impossible, yet here it was. You must believe.

This is a true story. He thought he recognized the song. Once upon a time, there was a woman who smelled of apples. Her children were not moving. There was a knock at the door.

"Get out." She screamed. When she left, he followed her. She led him down unwritten alleyways, into desperation. There were two families, and they were at war.

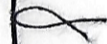
Blood dripped down. The stars fell. The sea was scarred. The sun retreated. The rain was more constant than he had ever been. She was silent. People are always crying. The lake was on fire. The child dived into the water. She knew that if she screamed, then he would find her.

Somewhere, a dog called. That night, the wind took down trees. The boat turned. Nowhere was safe. The clouds opened, swallowed, closed. They were drinking when it happened. She had never been in love. The knife slipped. Her heart fell. In this beginning there is darkness, then fire.

The betrayal was sudden. She did not have time to react. The storm built them a newer, cleaner world.

By the time he understood, it was too late. Drowning, he clutched at fish, reaching for life. He dropped the glass. He awoke. She did not know where she was, where she had come from.

He knew every inch of the room, knew it better than her. That year the hotel burnt down. The sickness stole his eyes. The forest sighed. The cat wanted milk. It turned.



Outside, the wind whispered. There were secrets. The days grew shorter, in rows. The leaves were beginning to change into something new. In the house across the street, light.

The walls were glass. The night was young. It grew into an inferno. He slipped the hammer from his pocket. His fist closed. Nothing was certain now.

I hate the moon. This is my story. Something was rising. The mist dissolved what it did not need. She cried. Outside was impossible.

She looked him over. There are secret places, where worlds slip into one another. The garden choked beneath ancient neglect. A shot rang. The phone died. It was over. The house had been empty for a long, long time.

Every story is true, somewhere. The walls were dust. The gates bent. The land suffered. They were silent. It was cold. The light had left them, and taken the child. Something had to happen soon.

She was running out of options. He was gasping, losing air. Someone lit a match. A promise was about to break. They sat together in the dark room, waiting.

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I don't know what to say, where to begin.

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No