

March 11th

Somewhere a phone is bleating, yet warm at last under my white wool throw, I'm reluctant to stir. The blank pages of my journal, of my recent life, stare up from my lap, daring me to begin. This last year, this Winter has stretched dark and heavy, has seemed interminable, like the ringing. Yet just as I know at some point my scribbling will begin, I recognize that first I will push myself up through the chill air, to snatch the thing from its cradle.

"Hello!"

"Christine . . . that you?"

"Who's this?"

"Easy gal, it's Josh. How're ya doin'?"

"Oh . . . Josh . . . Sorry."

"I happened to see in the paper that your father died . . . Wanted to say I'm sorry. Sorry for you both."

"Oh, well . . . thanks . . ."

"The notice said it was a long time coming."

"Yes, a long time."

"He wasn't that old . . ."

"Sixty-five."

Low whistle. "His smoking?"

"Yup . . . So, what's up? . . . Guess you're my old man now."

Josh coughed and gracefully changed gears, offering work, his usual travel piece, this time to "the blue skies and limitless vistas of Santa Fe, land of Georgia O'Keefe. And it's warm out there, I hear."

Tempted, need the work, the travel—change. Somehow he gets people, women mostly, at his pathetic rates—women eager for life, adventure, articles to fill their résumés. There was a time when I would have taken it, life on a shoestring, the romance of places and the occasional man. Before my marriage, when I was young. “Can’t Josh. Got rent problems. I need more than you pay, unless you’re opening your pockets.”

He laughed. “Like to, for you, but you know . . .” He was being kind. He knew my rate has climbed beyond what he offers. But we chatted. He carries a fondness from the time we dated, years ago, after college.

Just before hanging up: “Oh Chris, try Kirsten. I heard she’s looking for a staff writer, and she pays decently.”

Thanked him before skittering back through the chill to my couch. Outside the wind had begun its low mourning moan, and rain railed bitterly against the sliding doors. Though I love this place, my aerie—even as it’s bled me dry—warmth has never been its reason why.

Pulled up my throw again, and my pages. Have begun recording, under this blanket of snow, events, thoughts, and reflections in hope they’ll tell me something new, and deliver me from these winter storms which never end.