

our last time

by Jerry Ratch

If you had gotten pregnant our last time, in 1967 (when you lied and told me “I guess I’m finally over you,”) then our son could have been that man you saw with the drooping moustache and his coattails flying in the lobby of the building in Louisville, KY in 1992. He would have been 24 and maybe looked just like me. He might have just returned from the first war in Iraq. And now, at the age of 43 or 44, he would be experiencing his first midlife crisis, just like his dad.

And he would be searching out his roots, and wondering who he was, really, and whether his ancestors (from Bohemia and Sweden) looked just like him. He would be desperately searching for his soul-mate because too much of life had already flown past and he had to catch up with himself and maybe start writing seriously. And try to live more in the moment (instead of always for the future, the future, whatever that is,) but with his haunted past peering over his shoulder and his ancestors appearing like a speckled moth on the ceiling of his youth.

And someone would still be thinking about him, and in her dreams she would find him sitting under a tree overlooking a river and she would sit down in the grass beside him and put her legs over his and slip her arm around his waist and lean her head on his shoulder and feel their hearts melting into one heartbeat and they would stay that way until it grew dark and he said it was getting late and maybe they should go now.

And you would say, no, stay a little while longer here with me, in this life, whatever it is. Just stay. And yes, there was a certain sweetness there.

