

Swimming Pool

by Kate Brown

My glasses fog up every time I go to collect her from the pool. I'll never get used to glasses. When my sight got suddenly worse the day she was born, I didn't tell anyone. As she turned from baby to child, my love for her grew, and my world got smaller, foggier.

When Peter and I ate out, I would say "I'll have what you're having." I'd never done this before, but we went to restaurants so rarely now we had a child, I thought he might not notice. He did. The next Saturday morning he told me we were going on an adventure. He took me to the new opticians in the centre of town. "She's a glasses virgin," he told the assistant. "I'm scared," I mumbled, almost to myself. After an hour and a half, I couldn't choose between bright red, bold frames and black, oblong chic. The assistant was irritated, but Peter was calm, guiding me through the process. I tried to remember whether he'd been this way when we first had sex. I didn't think so.

In the end, I went for black, for sophistication, but red took a hold. When our daughter started school, I dressed her in red. My own mother had coloured me brightly, and even though I grew up to wear blue in resistance, I followed her path. Sometimes mothers are right, I reasoned. And maybe I was, because my daughter was quite untouched.

If I cannot sleep, which is often, I try to imagine reaching through a wall made of dust, isolated particles unable to join together and keep me out. I reach through to touch his hand, to envelop her hand in our two. There is only my hand, holding hers. We are alone. You cannot dress your love in red.

The smell of chlorine, now, the minute I step out of the revolving door into the lobby, it contains his death. It is everywhere. My steamed-up glasses, when he's not here to tease me for my vanity, nature's final cockeyed joke.

