

Bedtime Story

by Michelle Elvy

Let me tell you, child, the story of how your father became your father.

Not the story of how his sperm crashed into my egg, how mad passion made a sweet sticky union that turned two into one and then in a split second became three. That is a good story, too, but this one is better.

We were driving down Highway 1, me at the wheel and him dialing the radio. Windows down, heatwave hitting us hard. Supertramp: *Give a Little Bit*. He turned it up, lit a cigarette, put it to my lips like he always did, his sweet salty fingers so close I wanted a nibble. When I turned my head slightly and said *No* he looked almost hurt. Then I said the thing I'd been hiding for two weeks: *I'm pregnant*. I couldn't read his face, and the telling of this simple truth was much like the rest of our relationship: unplanned and hot. I saw the slight slump of his shoulders that accompanied his bent head, his black Oriole's cap shielding his eyes. And then he stubbed out his Camel unfiltered, exhaled long and slow. He took the pack from his Tshirt pocket, turned it over, studied it as if it might reveal some magic wisdom: *Run away! Marry her! Find another girl!* Then he pulled the remaining cigarettes from the pack, and, one by one, tossed them out the window. Turned Supertramp louder, cupped his hand round my sweaty neck, and grinned.

