

Rough Draft

by S.H. Gall

The sky was gorgeous today, bestowed with circling helicopters and biplanes towing advertisements for insurance companies. The clouds parted for these, then massed against them. My gaze became a propeller and I thought I might take a picture with my phone, but I didn't want a reminder of time spent with a person I don't love. I'm sure you've felt the same toward me many times. Our relationship is built upon wry mistrust and reluctantly shared DNA.

The way you loved my mother was never anything like how I loved her or how my sister loved you or how I loved my sister. We were a standard middle class family. Nothing added up to create a whole, just a fractured mess resembling something real. I know you regretted how this came about by the way you hurled that bottle of salad dressing at Mom when I was six. It was a lot to be aware of as a little boy. I handled it, in the long run, but I don't really think it was what rational people call "fair." I never quite became a man no matter how far I was aged beyond my years.

Now, finally, I'm allowed to feel youthful and free, as much as adult life will allow. There is no longer a shadow behind my eyes, something fated and cruel. I am light in the loafers and happy with my lot. If seeing you represents a sky broken by airborne ambivalence, I can deal with that. As long as you know it's too much to ask of me, to feel anything more.

Seth Gall has had work published in China, Canada, and the U.S. His work has appeared in Word Riot, SmokeLong Quarterly, and A-Minor Magazine. He is S.H. Gall in decomP Magazine, Nanoism, issues one and 27 of SmokeLong Quarterly, amphibi.us, Five Star Literary Stories, and Fictionaut.

