Indonesia

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Cover Page Footnote
Childhood with Michelle consisted of many bruises and loss of teeth. She even knocked me unconscious twice. Adolescence wasn't much better and neither was early adulthood. Not sharing love and happiness with Michelle or comforting each other's pain is what I regret the most about our relationship. I wanted her to see my strength and weakness. We are connected from birth to death. Not just friends. Sisters, Alike. I needed her to lead the way for me, and sometimes I still do. For five years we have lived a thousand miles apart and we just had our first normal conversation this Christmas. "Normal" means that we didn't argue and we actually enjoyed the visit. How ironic that being apart may be what actually may bring us closer together. My wish is that we someday share love and comfort.

"No one can love you more or hurt you more than a sister." Maybe she and I can finally put an end to the Swingset War.

-- Suzanne M. Wood

Second Prize Winner

Indonesia

He was gone before I pulled my first trout from the lake.

my blue eyes dulled the proud sparkle from my uncle's teeth

next to son's father's recognition

I held the thermometer so close to the desk lamp

the day of the father-son picnic

that my male chaperone agreed.

my bed was my place for that day

there were phone calls

I would that they were more than my digits

over the span of a lifetime

he returned on an airplane for visits from the East

a great deed proven by great expense

to the name of which I am the last

each talked of our side of the canyon

curious of life on the other side

but the bridge was broken

my penalty sealed

his too

for I am now master of my mind

what I say and think

was born from mother and sister

Some days I become afraid

do I not truly know what it is to be a man

for how can a woman reduce herself to show me

He wants to fix that bridge

believing his vast wealth can cover the cost

reducing the experience of a lifetime

to a sum

-- Matthew J. McGowan