

Lunar Park

[task][Preface: 5/2012]
[Patrick Lovelace]

I convinced myself I hadn't seen anything. I had done this many times before (when my father struck me, when I first broke up with Jayne, when I overdosed in Seattle, every moment I thought about reaching for my son) and I was adept at erasing reality. As a writer, it was easy for me to dream up the more viable scenario than the one that had actually played itself out. And so I replaced the roughly ten minutes of footage—which began in the Allens' backyard and ended with me holding a gun in my son's room as a car from my past disappeared onto Bedford Street—with something else. Maybe my mind had started shifting while listening to the grating voices at the Allens' dining table. Maybe the marijuana had created those manifestations I had supposedly witnessed. Did I believe what had happened last night? Did it make any difference if I did? Especially

since no one else believed me and there was no proof? As a writer you slant all evidence in favor of the conclusions you want to produce and you rarely tilt in favor of the truth. But since on the morning of November third the truth was irrelevant—since the truth had already been disqualified—I was free to envision another movie. And since I was good at making up things and detailing them meticulously, giving them the necessary spin and shine, I began realizing a new film with different scenes and a happier ending that didn't leave me shivering in the guest room, alone and afraid. But this is what a writer does: his life is a maelstrom of lying. Embellishment is his focal point. This is what we do to please others. This is what we do in order to flee ourselves. A writer's physical life is basically one of stasis, and to combat this constraint, an opposite world and another self have to be constructed daily. The problem I encountered that morning was that I needed to compose the peaceful alternative to the terror of last night, yet the half world of the writer's life encourages drama and pain, and defeat is good for art: if it was day we made it night, if it was love we made it hate, serenity became chaos, kindness became viciousness, God became the devil, a daughter became a whore. I had been inordinately rewarded for participating in this process, and lying often leaked from my writing life—an enclosed sphere of consciousness, a place suspended outside of time, where the untruths flowed onto the whiteness of a blank screen, into the part of me that was tactile and alive. But, admittedly, on that third day in November, I was at a point at which I believed the two had merged and I could not tell one from the other.