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We assemble at the crematorium on Tuesday morning. As the oldest of the children, it is decided I will ride with my father in the funeral car. When we arrive, the wind is so strong it pops several umbrellas inside out. Until now, this has only happened in picture books.

This is what I think ‘submersion’ means: one field’s absolute disappearance within another.

This is what I think ‘field’ means: the elemental, whether base or divine. Every civilization has a flood myth. I will tell you ours: May 30th, 1948, the city of Vanport, then Oregon’s second largest, is destroyed when the Columbia River bursts its banks. Such are the premises from which we’ll begin:

At a yard sale in Tacoma, I find Jackie Robinson’s rookie card inside a cigar box. Mint, except the card has been drawn by a child and the numbers replaced by crude hieroglyphs. I buy the card for 12 cents and keep it under my pillow for the next seven years. The first night we sleep together, you find it and ask me what it is. I tell you I stole it from a museum. You say you used to dream about a thief. How he would leave you in the night, only to return days later with scars on his forearms and diamonds in his shoes.

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The original idea was that with every step we would loosen our anchor with the real. The problem was that I never understood what that meant. In any case, the story would have run along these lines:

Amid rumors of a muscular condition that will paralyze her lower body, she is baptized as Dorothy Gale. Initially, it is just a precaution. The next morning we leave Oregon for Kansas.

The journey prompts a correspondence with the Pacific. Although the Ocean is at first slow to respond, our exchange continues for several years. The letters are eventually collected and published under the title *Oceanography*. The volume is available for only a few days before it's withdrawn on charges of oversight and blasphemy. All known copies including the original typescript are gathered and retired to the real hollowed out mountain, served by a secret railroad, somewhere in the Adirondacks.

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I am 13 when Marjorie agrees to tell me the truth. Jackie says ‘truth’ is the name people give to lies they can’t live without. I tell him to go fuck himself and walk four paces back for the next hour.

While the pews empty, I stand with my father as men in long coats line up to shake his hand and nod. I’m wearing my school uniform because it is the smartest suit of clothes I own. It is generally agreed that the service was lovely. At the pub, the egg sandwiches smell rotten. I sneak out to the beer garden and smoke a cigarette in the rain. Taken from Marjorie’s purse a week ago in the hospital. I use a whole book of matches to keep it lit.

Prior to 1949, vehicle safety tests were performed almost exclusively with the dead. Aside from more familiar automobile based tests, these early experiments involved pitching corpses down an elevator shaft, dropping steel weights onto their skulls.

In Tamil mystic literature, Lemuria is the sunken continent that connects Madagascar, Australia and the southern tip of India. Throughout the 20th century, several cultists have claimed that Lemurian survivors persist in a network of tunnels beneath Mount Shasta. In every letter, I address the Pacific as Gretl.

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We sit at a stone table and tie bracelets round each other's wrists. When the bracelets snap we pass a teacup and spit in it. When I spit, I see blood in the cup. When the cup cracks, we agree these are good omens.

It looks as if everyone has survived until I notice the dentist. A small crowd gathers round him but nobody can say anything. Jackie is the first to turn away. I want to follow him but it had been my watch. I feel like I should stay and do something. Or at least be present when somebody else does something. But nobody does anything. We just stand there, looking at the dentist and the blood on his right temple. A superpower is a center of gravity. Every book is an account of its own failure.