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THIRST FOR THE KNOWN

*Where to act is to be free and to be free is to act.*

—GUY-ERNEST DEBORD, *SOCIETY OF THE SPECTACLE*

Meet William Eaton Phelps. It's 1941. All limbs, the tall thirteen-year-old has prowled his way into a rough Denver neighborhood, west of the then-dreaded Wazee Street with its filth and its panhandlers. Look for a kid below the boulevard where the wide South Platte River swallows its tributary, Cherry Creek. Not the cultivated urban wetland that it is today, it's a dark, sunken no-man's land, a place for loneliness and pranks, a teenage boy's refuge. Take a deep breath, and then run with him up the creek.

Near water and even in water as he jumps from shore to rock and back again, you race with this nimble human against the flow. It feels good. Weightless. The long strides outdistance his childhood. Does he want solace without admitting it? Do you? Want revenge but uncertain why? He, and you too, settle for throwing every muscle at whatever happens next, near water.

In no time, you've run over two miles. Access to the creek abruptly becomes impossible. High fencing swallows the waterway into the manicured grounds of the Denver Country Club. Some might drool over this vista. Many acres of

impeccable golf course and woods unfurl along Cherry Creek. On the south are mansions built by Denver's early mining and cattle barons. On the north is an exclusive neighborhood planned in the early twentieth century by nationally renowned landscape architects, the Olmsted brothers. This teenager doesn't live in a mansion or even a house, though. He resides right at the Denver Country Clubhouse, upstairs with the old gentlemen lodgers. His mother has only just deposited him there, this young man called Bill, on the privileged side of the fencing.



Bill's parents took off without him when the United States entered World War II. His mother, preparing to follow his father to Washington, DC, where he was stationed in the adjutant general's office, said goodbye at the clubhouse. She didn't give Bill the bike or pistol he wanted. Her long fingers opened in his palm, dropping a heavy reminder of his heritage—a gold ring engraved with her family crest. On it, a beady-eyed griffin held a fluttering standard in its talons. The standard bore the words *Veritas Alles Vincit*.

Learning that this meant "Truth Conquers All," Bill knew better than to register disappointment.

Truth and conquest— isn't that what teenagers do? Throughout the war, Bill communed primarily with other country-club lodgers: widowers and divorced gentlemen many times his age who drank a lot. The club chef made sack lunches for Bill, who rarely went to school. With no one to stop him, he improvised, playing snooker, caddying on the club golf course for pocket money, and hanging around the club ice rink, where he was reputed to have dazzled girls with dance maneuvers on used hockey skates. Growing up unsupervised at an exclusive country club, the only thing Bill lacked was anyone who cared.

Four years later, the war ended. His parents returned to Colorado to find that Bill was already a man. He had learned what some people never learn—to be wary, opportunistic, and to shoulder his own future.

In autumn 1947, this long, lean renegade invited a girl he had met on the club ice rink, a girl who cared, to overnight at a farm settled by his grandparents on his mother's side, the Eatons. They drove north into Colorado prairie farmland on the rural highway that had once been the South Platte Trail. Bill's mother chaperoned, lodged between the young pair in the front seat. Even so, the day glistened with possibilities. Cottonwood foliage cast fluttering gold over the South Platte River banks, where it sparkled for miles in the mirror of the winding river. And beyond the gleam, the Front Range rose as purple and

majestic as any mountain view in America. The nineteen-year-old watched the road and sometimes looked past his mother at his pretty sweetheart, Dorothy Ann.

Gogo, as she was known, was only seventeen years old. With a single occupation, Bill, she could hardly contain her excitement. Though stealing glances at Bill's hands, Bill's fingers, Bill's fingernails on the wheel, she appeared to meditate on the white veil of snow on Long's Peak to the west. City scenery rolled away behind them into a backdrop of pastures, silos, and haystacks. She noticed an enormous forked cottonwood next to the road at the little farm town of Brighton.

"I'd like to be like that with Bill," Gogo fantasized, "a tree with two trunks."

They passed Fort Lupton and Fort Vasquez, towns that had grown around old trapper trading posts on the South Platte, and progressed from there through Greeley, then only a few thousand in population. They drove slowly through the town of Eaton, named after Bill's great-grandfather, author of *truth conquers all*. A few miles west at Woods Lake was the Eatons' farm. As their car rolled under the lofty porte-cochère east of the house, Bill's girl was giddy, agape. Under a green copper roof, the brick house was massive—three stories high. His mother got out and ran ahead. Bill had Gogo by the elbow as he flung open the beveled-glass door.

The grounds were a gentleman farmer's compendium—glass-paned hot-houses, seasonal garden, barn, coops, paddocks, the impressive lake that tied the holdings to water, and a nine-hole pitch-and-putt golf course, all rimmed with recently mown fields. Before that autumn day was finished, she saw all this, and more. After a formal dinner with candelabra and finger bowls, with serving staff in black uniforms and starched white aprons, Bill pulled Gogo into the living room. Halfway across the fifty-foot expanse was a mantle. Flames chased up the flue. The overstuffed furniture seemed built for Titans. It held down a Persian rug with colors as saturated as scarab gems. The lanky man, then the age my son is now, bent over to wind up the Victrola.

Is not spontaneous motion, intuitively taken, similar to lovemaking? From watching animals, and people who move with grace—whose appendages press as inquisitively against air, water, and ground as against flesh—I believe it is true. Bill there, in remote Weld County, Colorado, would have scoffed at theories about navigating through space as one would move over a woman's body. Scoff or not, he did it that night; he followed his instincts. Grabbing his trim sweetheart by the waist, he twirled Gogo across the parquet that edged the carpet. The song was "Cheek to Cheek."

After they'd circled the enormous room twice, it was time to rewind the Victrola handle. Their swirls eddying around the enormous room, they rewound Irving Berlin over and over again, until their sides ached, until laughter buckled them. Breathless, spent, they drifted to separate bedrooms, sinking into monogrammed linens so smooth and cool that they seemed refrigerated. Night passed, chasing dreams of lust and ambition over the horizon.

In the predawn darkness, Bill knocked on her bedroom door.

This was the signal.

Gogo dressed quickly and hurried to meet him on the east porch, where he had positioned a ladder. The sun's first semaphores shown to the east. He following her, they climbed onto the roof, moving quietly so as not to awaken his mother and uncle. Then they lay down on their bellies at the crest, facing west so they could peer over Woods Lake, still in profound blackness.

"I don't see anything," she whispered, leaning into his shoulder to keep warm.

"Wait."

Content to be together, she was quiet.

Dawn is soundless, until it's not. A rooster crowed out there, or a rabbit screamed in a coyote's fast jaws, or a door creaked. And at once the obsidian surface of the lake stirred. A flying carpet stitched of a thousand silent mallards lifted into the autumn morning, up and up, each wing paired with another wing, gaining purchase on the approaching daybreak. The birds flapped in unison. The flapping was so close to the two young people that their hair moved, splatters of water dampened their clothing, their cheeks pinkened, their clothing pressed closer to their skin and they, naturally, pressed closer to each other. The whirling air was an invitation, that they might join the drakes and their hens as they whooshed from the water up over the house and into the newly mown cornfield, the young people who would soon be my parents.

.....■.....

Bill and Gogo took the mallards' invitation. Two years later, Bill's own stint in the army was over. The twenty-one-year old then set his uncommon trajectory. His grandfather's affluence was spread too thinly among too many children to yield much, but still wearing the signet ring, Bill committed to his "truth." His object was not to lodge in close quarters at the country club or even the grander prospects of staying in a manor along its edges. He didn't aspire to white collars, ties, jackets, and wingtips; nor to a mahogany desk in a high rise. What he wanted was to buy and build his own version of his maternal forbearer's gentle-

manly farmer life on the water. And this—minus many acres, live-in help, golf course, limousine, and any peace of mind—Bill would eventually do.

His goal was autonomy. It was an American dream, not of a picket fence, but of a “spread.” This freedom demanded *owning* land, not leasing it or buying it over time. And the land needed to be healthy, with good soil, diverse opportunities, and wildlife as rich as those flocks of mallards that lent dawn such awe at his grandfather’s farm. There wasn’t any question that habitation, farming, and nature could be compatible. Without all three, there’d be no surviving. Owning land with mineral rights was desirable. Owning land with water rights was critical. These ambitions had ties to an old West of count-your-fence-posts and brook-no-transgressions. In 1950 Bill married Gogo and bought his own Victrola.

They didn’t know it, but their life together began at the same time as in far-away France, a provocateur named Guy Debord shouted for do-it-yourself trajectories such as theirs. Sure, there were clear differences between Guy and Bill—Debord was a Marxist rabble-rouser and my father was an aspiring property owner—but both disdained the “normal” lifestyles imposed on them by civilization. Neither wished to lose their innermost ability to connect wholeheartedly with whatever they did. Debord’s message was “Don’t forfeit your sensuality, your free will, your rights!” Bill and Gogo didn’t. *Move as your nature dictates instead.* And they did.

By the time I was out of the bassinets and ambulatory, Debord (whose work would provide a basis for contemporary urban planning) had coined the term *psychogeography*, a concept important to our story. *Psychogeography*, in Debord’s terms, is the innate ability to navigate over the ground on which we live.<sup>1</sup> Each of us has, buried in our consciousness, a sort of compass—passed along with our genes from generation to generation—that “knows” Earth’s forms and can intuitively navigate them, just as water does.

Debord claimed that the most important psychogeographic strategy is the *dérive*, pronounced “day-reeve.” A *dérive* is a way of acting. In a *dérive*, persons—persons who are more like wild animals, and perhaps like you for that matter—stop moving through life as automatons. In a *dérive*, people let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there. A *dérive* demands following one’s instincts.<sup>2</sup> My parents were naturals. And I, like most two-year-olds, had already

### Dérive

In the word *dérive*, the *rive* comes from the French word for “riverbank,” as in the banks on either side of Paris’s River Seine: the Rive Droite and Rive Gauche.

mastered acts of psychogeography if not its lexicon. I demonstrated by clambering willy-nilly between newborn siblings, food, and water.

A *dérive* is worth thinking about, but it's even more worth doing. Bill's *dérive* began from scratch, with little education, no inheritance, and hard work. He, my mother, my sister, brother, and I lived in Denver for the twenty years it took Bill to hit his mark. My father began humbly, working as a milkman from midnight until dawn. To economize, he set the milk-truck brakes lightly on the descending streets, such that the milk truck could roll downhill while he wasn't in it. The beanpole named Bill ran zigzags back and forth between the houses and the slow-rolling vehicle, carrying fresh milk, cottage cheese, and butter from local dairies to houses throughout the Cherry Creek neighborhood. In the afternoons, he progressed to real estate sales and from there to professional ranch and resort management. With three young children and few options, he was what you'd call a "go-getter."

In the 1960s, when I was thirteen myself, Bill made his first farmland purchase north of Denver on the South Platte River, about half hour from his grandfather's house on Woods Lake at Eaton. Through the window of my own adolescent disenfranchisement, his initial 300 acres looked dicey. The slope included a windowless cinderblock structure called the "Hog House" with an interior too awful to contemplate. Almost as cheerless was a long trailer we nonplussed city children referred to as "Early Raunch." Undaunted, Bill kept making land deals and at last accumulated 800 adjacent acres, a forty-five-minute drive from the Rockies' Front Range. The spread encompassed not just Hog House and trailer, but two little farmhouses and barns, and a larger clapboard house. The latter is a former stagecoach stop built in 1864. The property's name, "Big Bend Station," is in tribute to its location where the northbound river takes a wide right turn to the east. Looking at the house today, one needs no great imagination to picture trappers, coaches, horses, mules, wagons, and worn-out vagabonds pulling in under the enormous cottonwoods. The stairs are concave from wear and the bathroom floor is a bit off-plumb, enough so that we must correct for it to keep our seat on the toilet.

Of the hoards that tromped and rolled along the South Platte Trail during the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth, many must have availed themselves of Big Bend Station's amenities. Lacking roads, travelers *had* to follow waterways. The South Platte River is one of two main tributaries of the Platte River, the North Platte being the other. The two merge near North Platte, Nebraska, and flowing east, ultimately meet the Missouri River, which flows to the Mississippi. The Platte River valley is broad, as noted by the



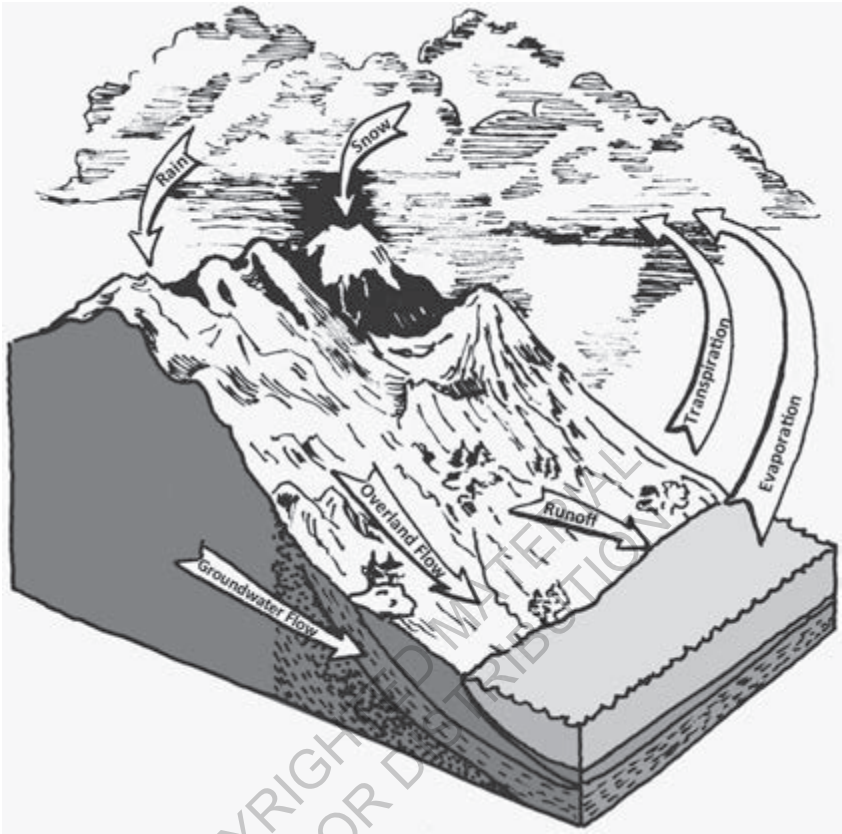
The Platte Basin.

French trappers who christened it *la Platte*, which means “flat” in French. In the Old West, the Platte represented a significant middle chunk of the Oregon Trail and the Mormon Trail, first for trappers, then for settlers and freighters. As many as a quarter million hopefuls traveled along the river during the Gold Rush.<sup>3</sup> Whereas northbound travelers took the North Platte fork, the South Platte that runs through what is now Bill’s farm marked travelers’ shortest and best route to and from Denver and Colorado’s mountainous gold and silver cache directly west.

Throughout our teen years, Gogo and Bill dragged us from Denver to the farm for weekends. There I imagined myself a hostage: not just a hostage, but also a changeling. To buoy my teen spirits, I’d gaze on the extravagant view to the west—the girder of Rocky Mountain peaks, many over 14,000 feet in height. Their vigorous mass stretches above the aspen, ponderosa, and lodgepole pine forests. At the time I regarded them as a lovely setting. Now I know that like everything on our watery planet, the peaks are the product of climate change and dynamic geology. It is hard to fathom that these nearly vertical surfaces are residual ocean floor, uplifted by recondite geologic forces such as *subduction* and *volcanic arcing*. Over the multimillennia, water and soil froze in crevices of rock that then fissured, split, and eroded away, sculpting the peaks, leaving them in skirts of glaciated granite and alpine tundra.

While we gawk at the remarkable mountains, downhill tumbles an incessant, nearly invisible cascade of tiny mountain fragments. At high altitude near the South Platte’s headwaters, the accumulations of crumbling granite are thin. Yet 130 miles downstream on the Plains, the river bottom and banks are thick with

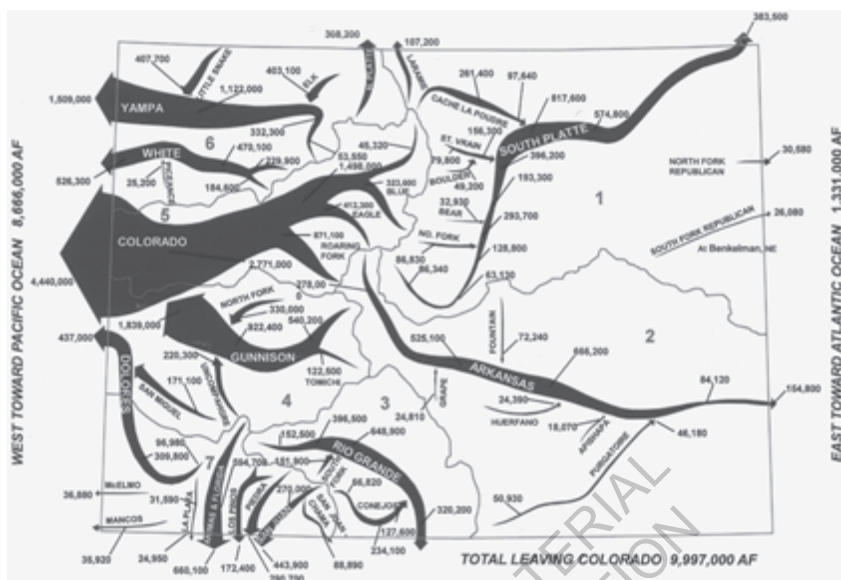




The Water Cycle.

permeable deposits of the stuff. A handful of soil from the farm feels gravelly between the fingers. Its sandy components were once mountain, and if it weren't for water and time, still would be.

And where does this water come from? Colorado's precipitous ranges are so close to the heavens that they make lovers of weather systems. Mountains massage the clouds, creating seasonal orgies of snow, hail, and rain. Utah, Nevada, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Kansas, Wyoming, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, and even Mexico all depend in part on this precipitation, as does Colorado itself. Colorado's snowfall is so abundant that mountain snow can remain many feet deep for the entire winter. In the spring, the sun begins chomping away at the snowfields, thawing them into rivulets, gullies, creeks, and rivers, unleashing an approximate average of 16 million acre-feet of water



Colorado historic average annual stream flows (acre-feet). Prepared by the Hydrographic Branch (2011 Revision). Historic averages obtained from the USGS Water-Data Report. Office of the State Engineer Colorado Division of Water Resources.

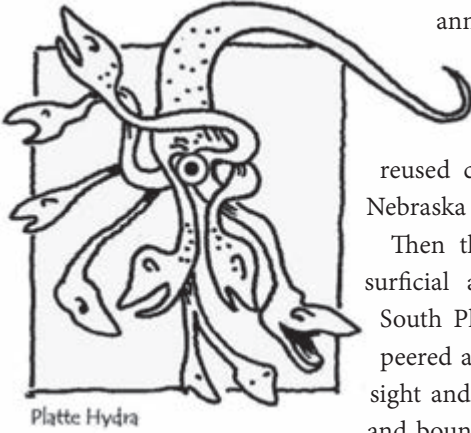
in all directions, millions of acre-feet that reach as many as 50 million people, by the time that runoff meets oceans. However, within the continental United States, Colorado is the one state that uses only its own water; all the water in Colorado—above or below surface—comes either from mountain runoff or the sky.

The South Platte, though hardly a gusher, still constitutes a “major river” in arid-West terms. Long before any of us were born the waterway used to braid and unbraid, changing course, but it is now hobbled between roaring interstates, with tightly controlled banks. The Platte functions not just as a river, but as a workhorse for Front Range urban populations. It is also the principal source of water for eastern Colorado, which has been among the top-yielding agricultural areas in the country for decades. Though but an average of 1.4 million acre feet flow into the South Platte

### Acre-Foot



An acre-foot is one acre, a foot deep in water or 325,851 gallons. This is equal to 43,560 cubic feet of water.



Platte Hydra

Bold, black dot marks Big Bend Station. The tail curls toward Nebraska, just as does the South Platte River.

annually, Coloradans use several times that amount, because water, once used, recharges the river, then is rediverted. That Platte water is reused countless times before it flows into Nebraska at Julesburg.<sup>4</sup>

Then there is groundwater in the Platte's surficial aquifer. To understand where the South Platte Aquifer is and where it isn't, I peered at a hydrology map. Following out of sight and under the river, the aquifer's shape and boundaries are a wider, more rotund version of the river's trajectory. It is a mistake to draw parallels between so vital an underground repository and a monster. Nevertheless, more than 300 miles long on the Colorado map, it has the look of a hydra, with heads sprouting from a long serpentine tail. The "heads" face south and west toward the Front Range. The aquifer's broader portions downstream of Big Bend Station (marked by dot on the graphic) constitute its "belly." They're as wide as fifteen miles. In its eastern reaches, still shadowing the river's course, the aquifer's "tail" is as narrow as one mile. Directly underfoot along the Front Range and yet invisibly so, the aquifer ranges from 20 to 200 feet deep and holds an average of over 10 million acre-feet of water derived of precipitation and irrigation recharge.<sup>5</sup>

### Surficial Aquifers

These *aquifers* are near the soil surface and consist of unconsolidated sand and limestone that may date to the Pliocene-to-Holocene periods. Water there is otherwise unconfined and moves along the hydraulic gradient from areas of recharge to rivers and streams.

The mythical Lernaean hydra, Hercules's hydra, resided, not in Colorado of course, but in an ancient Greek farm region, then as wracked by drought as Colorado and all the West presently is. There, Poseidon came to the rescue of a lovely woman, Amymone, whom he instructed to pull his trident from a rock. When she did, a spring gushed forth from the aquifer below. The Greek farms were saved from drought, but unfortunately Poseidon's trident unleashed the poison-breathed hydra. That's how it is with gods. Better to let sleeping hydras lie? Hence, the second of Hercules's labors—right after doffing the lion pelt—was

drawing the Lernaean hydra from its lair, then slaying the monster one head at a time. This was no easy trick, because the hydra's heads grew back, just as the South Platte Aquifer's nine "heads" recharge with water seasonally and during years with average precipitation. Historically, over 900,000 acre-feet recharge the aquifer annually.<sup>6</sup> As coming chapters, or "spectacles," unfold, the real monstrosity may become cavalier treatment of the aquifer and its contents.

My father's purchases, recorded on titles and deeds, came with the right to pump from this dynamic and recharging subterranean repository: the South Platte Aquifer. For additional water, he bought ample shares in two private irrigation ditches that deliver water diverted from the South Platte, the kind of ditches, if not the very ditches that his great-grandfather Ben Eaton, a historic waterman, had dug a century prior. All the water rights were guaranteed by the state of Colorado, the property rights by the Constitution. Bill's succession of farm purchases took two decades.

..... ■ ■ .....  
 Leaving Denver to move to Big Bend Station was my father's grand design, not my mother's, a distinction perceptible only to her. Not until a "For Sale" sign hung in front of our vine-covered house in that tony Denver Country Club neighborhood did Gogo's misgivings overwhelm her good-sport nature. At the former stagecoach stop, Bill and she were doing reconnaissance upstairs. There was no ignoring that low ceiling, built for small statures the century before. It was practically *on* Bill's head. To Mom, it seemed miniaturized, for Lilliputians or Borrowers or elves. Tears began to flow. Bill took her into his arms, saying that it wasn't too late to change their minds, that they didn't need to move to the country, that they could take down the "For Sale" sign in Denver.

"Whatever you want, Gogo. It's up to you."

*Up to me?* Gogo peered out at the fields to the west. The windowpanes, made of uneven old glass, warped the cottonwoods beyond so they seemed slightly to wiggle. They batted like eyelashes, she said. Seeing that and with Bill next to her as he'd been on the roof out at Woods Lake all those years before, Gogo's pioneer spirit kicked in. She said, "No, let's do it." And she never complained about the move again, even though the reasons for so doing were already budding like hydra heads.

So we moved. Welcoming us was a plague of cutworm moths, millions of them, and they weren't much smaller than hummingbirds. We timid city folks took refuge inside. During the day, moths snoozed in powdery brown masses on the window screens, as thick as café curtains. Once the sun went down,

they were unstoppable in their pursuit of light. We moved stealthily between boxes and disarray, keeping the doors closed and lights off. Everything seemed normal enough as long as it remained dark, but with a flick of the switch, the rooms erupted into a frenzied horror, something midway between *The Birds* and *Mothra*. Particularly the rooms that gave off to the outdoors were alive with hundreds, make that hundreds and hundreds, of startled moths. This siege went on for days.

My father's hard work had carried us over two decades like a silk balloon, with few bumps or tears. In moving, we cut ties with many Denver resources and people, whose hot air had until then passed as oxygen. Decamping to the farm couldn't be justified in the same way as acquiring a weekend house in Vail or Aspen. My parents' logic was lost on the city set. Not a resort getaway with nearby shops and activities, the farm was in the middle of nowhere. Some Denverites made the hour drive to see my family, but you could see it in their eyes: they thought my parents had lost their minds. Gogo and Bill felt it and sometimes said it: "Well, now we know who are real friends are."

And their "real" children. Cutworm moths and abandoned Denverites didn't faze my fourteen-year-old brother, Will, not at all. For Will, life was a hunt. He took to the outback like a Mohican. Already a gifted tracker and amateur taxidermist, he cut his hair in a Mohawk and struck up friendships with farmers' children, several of whom emerged from his lair at the trailer sporting Mohawks of their own. My sister, Annzo, was not so easily acclimatized. Poor thing sequestered herself on an island of civility upstairs, barely moving from a chaise longue except to get to her car and to Denver.

I had graduated from high school. While most people my age got stoned and got laid, I gathered up my books, my antiques, my carpet, and even my curtains hoping to cloister myself at Big Bend Station . . . in the Lilliputian sector. But it was hopeless. Yes, meadowlarks singing from the fence lines were poetic, but I couldn't wait to get away from what seemed like bumpkinland. My family was going to have to adjust to the isolation, the lack of sophistication, and the smell of manure without me. Under pretext of going to cooking school, I fled to Paris, where I could macerate in culture, where my thigh-high boots weren't at risk of cow pies, where Guy Debord was railing at people my age to *dérive*. Childhood was over, irremediably over.

The City of Lights was its own reward and a far cry from our expanse of pastures. Not for over eighteen months did I return, not to live, but to pop in intermittently on the farm, an *Animal Planet*. Big Bend Station's kitchen window opened onto frolicking bunnies and little quail trailing after bigger quail to hide

under the junipers. If I'd tied a Tershia-cam to my noggin, there would have been footage of dickcissel flocks bursting from alfalfa pastures and solitary kill-deers hovering erratically before descending again to feed on insects. Mourning dove "dules" migrated through in the fall, clinging to the paddock, gleaning in cornfields and trying not to become fricassee. Belted kingfishers monitored the river buffet from snags lodged in the sediment. As it turned colder, thousands of mallards, wood ducks, and snipe lit on the river on their way south. They too foraged in the fields, though foxes and coyotes hunted there too. These wild canines were so crafty that one spotted them only peripherally; a second look rarely confirmed that they were there at all. Around Christmas, enormous dark chevrons of migrating Canada geese, miles long, appeared in sky. With formations resembling colossal arrows that might have been launched across the Plains from unseen mountain-dwelling archers, hundreds of thousands, indeed *millions* of honking, migrating birds aimed at prairie farmland.

Wild Will soon managed to shoot two geese with one shot, making himself a hero among meat eaters. His room was already full of glass-eyed animals that he'd killed then subjected to taxidermy, the beaver holding an ashtray next to his bed most unpardonably. He sported clothes made from pelts he'd tanned and whipstitched with rawhide. His carnage, plus filet mignons still in the form of cattle just over the fence, had turned Annzo into a vegetarian. She'd left home too by then and was making a success of modeling for Head Skis at international resorts.

Every time I visited, my father took me on an excursion down to the river and back. Known as "the tour," the trip's object was wildlife emersion. Because the slough never froze, ducks fed there on wild watercress year-round, but they almost always took flight as we approached, sounding soft applause as their webbed feet met resistance in the water at takeoff. In their absence, Pop and I closely examined the muddy banks. This palimpsest marked the itinerary of passing paws. One could gauge how many hours or days before the prints occurred by their dryness, by whether they were one on top of another, whether there were fallen leaves in them. Not that we toured down on all fours, moving along on our knuckles. Pop simply gestured here and there, waving his hand toward raccoon prints, which he claimed were evidence of coons poking for crayfish. Dragging tail prints indicated the short work beaver were making of cottonwood saplings. Deer, though the largest critters, were hard to spot in their stiff tan coats (hiding from my brother), except when their heads appeared above a line of sight. It was easiest to see them in the spring and summer when they grouped with their fawns. Pairs of bald eagles lifted dripping carp from the

Platte to treetops, where they tore at and swallowed them. Great blue herons soared along the horizon, their prehistoric shapes reflected in the timeless water. This was Pop's life. And experiencing all this with him was very different from gazing up at Chagall's ceiling at the Garnier Opera in Paris. It was primal. Here, I wasn't a spectator; I was *in* it. It was eyes, ears, and nose about water proximity.

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