



REFLECTIONS

Claire Guyton

inspired by *Quarry Girl*

And now here, at the quarry, always her summer safe place, she looks at the water, so cool on her skin. Dragonflies hum at the water's edge, and the clean scent of pine cuts straight through their buzz.

Jenny tends to be startled by her own face in all those photos her friends take while they're hanging out—who *is* that? She tries to recreate the twisty half-smiles or the distance in the eyes when she stares at the mirror, just to see how it happens that she drifts away and becomes someone else, *why* it happens. What was I thinking about when I got that look? That it was almost lunchtime? The fight with Susan? She focuses again on the C in algebra but no, tonight, in her bathroom mirror, she's just Jenny.

All these pictures of herself. She's beginning to *really see*.

Something she's noticed recently—the way her hair falls, sometimes, slashing her cheeks. She's been practicing that. If she turns quickly enough and catches her face in the mirror at just the right split second, the fans of dark hair make her cheekbones look more pointed. Someone seeing her face that way might think she's thinner than she is, much thinner.

And she's been chasing her nose. Martin Agee told her last week that she has a bump on the end of it. It took her a while to see what he meant—she had to tilt her head to the side and back to get the angle.

Yesterday she was trailing her mother on the sidewalk when she saw a flash of something. She glanced to her side and caught herself in the plate glass window of a pizza place. When had her thighs started bulging out like that? *What's wrong with you?* her mother had asked. She had meant, *Why are you dawdling?* but that's not how Jenny took it. So many things wrong with her. She pointed at the glass, mute.

And now here, at the quarry, always her summer safe place, she looks at the water, so cool on her skin. Dragonflies hum at the water's edge, and the clean scent of pine cuts straight through their buzz. Walled in by the rock and trees, she tries to relax into the calm of this closed world. She steps farther into the water and the ripples slide out from her body like clear silk. They fracture this picture of herself, laid flat beneath her, this oblong Jenny with the curtain of hair, the small, pale face, that ball on the end of her nose. Five noses, ten noses. Her faces, her bellies and arms, her bloated legs; everything is in fragments, gliding out to slap the stone that encircles her.

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