

Exodus

We drift apart like continents.
Our shores rearrange
themselves in awkward lines,
successive drafts in
the revision of the world
we made for ourselves.
My mother drew maps
for sixteen years, holding
a magnifying glass in one hand
and with the other tracing
the signatures of the planet,
rivers and railroads,
highways and city limits.
Now I can only imagine her hand
brushing the erasures of
our landscape, smoothing
the fault lines between us
just as she smoothed the pages
of her bible every night,
leafing through them by
the moon at her nightstand.
I think she would understand
when I say that this parting
is our Red Sea, the open gate
to a wilderness we might walk
forty years without a map,
every inch at least a mile.
Like Israelites we will wander
the counties just outside
the promised land, all the while
asking what pillar of smoke led us here,
how a rose can blossom into desert,
or why we must be chosen
but still lost.

—Michael Hicks

This poem won third place in the *BYU Studies*
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