

## **An Old Secret**

If you walk on your tiptoes and carefully avoid every third plank as you cross the wood hall, you may be lucky enough not to wake my father. My mom, she sleeps deep. My father has been known to hear someone turn over in bed two rooms away. It is never a good idea to wake him. He sleeps light as a feather. He wakes like an angry and very hungry bear.

Tonight I have to risk it though. I have to see why my mom took that picture away so quickly. I must have seen it wrong. I must have. But, mom, she was blushing and talking really fast. She never does that. She sleeps like the dead and awake she is steady like a giant sequoia. Today she was a banana tree in a hurricane.

She shoved the picture into her apron pocket. Now, the apron is hanging over the back of a stool in our kitchen. I can see it. It is a good six skipped planks, and a lot of praying I won't wake my father, away.

The light in the house is dim. Someone left the TV on in the back room, past the kitchen. The flickering light is distracting. It is making me think someone is coming. Each step I count and hold my breath.

That picture, it was of my father. I've seen pictures like that of him before -- long hair, a mustache that reaches out like my beach cruiser's handlebars.

I need to see the crumpled close-up again. It is a snapshot of a wedding. My father's wedding. I can tell because it is just him--tall and awkwardly slouching like he still does in all our family photos-- the minister and the lace- adorned bride smiling broadly at the camera.

That beaming bride is platinum blonde. My mom's hair is black as a crow.