

What Is Left
Elizabeth Mayer

No matter how long it's been, when they are together it's always the same. Their lives are different now. There are spouses and children. There are houses and mortgages and basements that flood. There are jobs they never thought they'd do. They've learned how bodies rebel. How the pelvis splits forever when a child passes through. How the dent of a scar stretching from the navel can sting for months. How a flight of panic can steal the breath in any moment of quiet. They know now how grief and birth can upend time. They know that time is fluid, days can feel endless, but a year, two years, a decade will fly. But also they know that, on a warm night, if you stop and look up at the sky, you may see a meteoroid fall and emit light—a meteor, sometimes misnamed a shooting star, both immaterial, the glow of something past—and if this happens you must make a wish, because, after all that has come and gone, you must remember still to hope, and, as they do when they're together, feel joy.