

Letting Go

by David Abrams

Jerrod had talked about Mona since Boston.

Mona this, Mona that. Mona in the morning, Mona in the evening.

Not that he regretted a single moment since they broke up, fuckno—just that it's hard to let something go, y'know?

Yeah, Kirsten nodded, smiled. She knew.

God knows he loved her—Kirsten—and he's still more than happy to make this move to San Fran, fuckyeah he's excited. It's just that some things are hard to shake, y'know?

Yeah, she knew.

She felt bad about lying. But it had to be done. For both their sakes.

You can't even imagine how giddy I am to be starting over like this with you, he said. (Kirsten flinched—unnoticed—at the word “giddy.”) This is *such* an opportunity, don't you think? Part of me wishes Mona could be here to see how this is all shaking out. But then, of course, another part of me's glad Mona *isn't* here. Mona always said she had her doubts about Silicon Valley. Mona never...Mona always...blahblahblah. Hey, pull over here, okay? I gotta pee. You want anything while I'm in there? A soda, maybe? Ice cream? Mona always liked those Eskimo bars...blah-de-blah-blah.

Jerrod's lips and tongue were like slabs of bologna someone shook in Kirsten's face as she hit the turn signal.

Kirsten was proud of herself. She'd been taking it well and she was pretty sure her real feelings weren't poking through.

She watched Jerrod move through the gas-pump islands, walking with a slight gotta-pee limp. Then she made her move.

Yes, she was proud of herself. The relief of accomplishment swept through her like fresh water. She'd done it with barely a tremble. Hands at three and nine on the steering wheel for precisely 1,952 miles—1,954 miles if you count the two when Kirsten's fingers

unclenched and slipped to five and seven when the car pulled out of the gas station at the bottom of Wyoming.

That was two miles ago. Two miles of silence. Just the wind brushing over the car.

She closed her eyes for the smallest of moments—like hitting the Reset button on a computer, the hard drive clicking, whirring, spinning in a new direction. When she re-opened them, she looked at the rearview mirror for the last time.

Somewhere in that reflective rectangle, two miles back, Jerrod stood in the still-settling dust at the Rock Springs, Wyoming gas station, his baloney mouth open, the ice cream no doubt already melting across his hand, his mind already trying to remember Mona's phone number.

