

First she shed the last ten pounds her body held on to after birthing her last baby. Then she left her house, her kids, the pencil-yellow school bus rounding the bend.

She'd burned her old journals, wiped her hard drive clean. She left the cleats by the door, a pot of rice on the stovetop. They shouldn't be without dinner.

He'd bought them a tiny house in the woods; she scrawled the address on a piece of paper, tucked it into her front pocket. She'd always wanted a tiny house. But then: all those kids.

Now the minivan lumbered along the local highway. Her resting leg trembled a little. All the songs were about her.

She passed the defunct post office on the corner.

The cars for sale by the side of the road.

The changeable letter church sign with its upbeat aphorisms. Today: *Hope found here.*

Sometimes she drove too close to the median strip, righting the car just in time. Her jerky movements made the umbrella stroller slide around in back. 338 miles till empty.

She was surprised how easy it was. The leaving. How quickly she stopped wondering, *Do they think of me?* She thought about how people pair up, run parallel for a while, part ways. "Life is one long letting go." She tapped the words into a note on her phone. Earlier that day, she could tell she wouldn't be beautiful when she grew old.

When she got to the house, he wasn't there. She unpacked her one bag into the one dresser in the one room. She waited.

They'd never met, but she liked the look of his photo—light stubble, kind eyes—and the way he signed his letters, "yours."

The house he'd found them was near the only intersection in town with a gas pump. Sometimes people would stop by, knock on her door for directions. She opened a sort of makeshift motel, slept with all her customers on the floor—her body the bed, the ground, the home. She was enough. She made them coffee come morning.

One boarder stayed for five days. On the last night, she called him by the name of the man she'd left behind. *See, he'd said, settling into her, see how we're all the same?*

Weeks fell away and were forgotten. She practiced lying flat on her back to disappear what was left of her childbearing belly. She waited by her front window, their front window, for him to come, lay his arm low across her waist.

Sometimes she got lonely. But as long as people kept passing through, she was fine. *