

neighborhood). Then it's college, walking down an aisle, having red-haired babies, making Jell-O molds. A kaleidoscope always spinning. Impossible to catch up to or hold still.

What would it be, that special thing Donna would find, like winning the state basketball championship and her picture on the front page of the ten newspapers in a box under Donna's mother's bed?

To explain this, all of it to Donna, in this moment. To make her understand there must be something in every girl's life that's only hers. Find that thing, live that moment where she's allowed to be someone else, even if for a day or one basketball season.

Donna's mother thought all this in the flash of half a second, her heart cracking with...not pride; something more than pride—maybe grief or fury or something so complicated it doesn't yet have a word, and she remembers thinking on that day, I should tell her, but there aren't real-life words for all that, and probably never will be, and even if those words existed, how would someone like her—housewife, mom, Donna's mom—how would she know them? And something stopped her from speaking.

So that's the last time she *saw* Donna. Quickly, she reminds herself, murmuring, "That was fun." Did she forget to say so to her daughter? Did she maybe throw away the leaf collection after it got an A?

The cops are pulling up in front of the house, tires crushing the layer of ice pellets, and Donna's mother feels wrenched into pieces, because she didn't say those things or anything. She had that day at Hickory Hill Park, but also, come on: she had every day. She won't dare confess this to the cops, opening the doors of their car in perfect unison, shutting them one after the other. "They're here," she says to Donna's father.

"Damn it," he says. "I'm so sick of this. Aren't you? No one deserves this, no one."

It's too late. Everything's too late. All she can do is wait and hope and