

Erin M. Riley, *A Reminder of Being There*

"Cujo was hit by a car on Mountain Ash Road, there is blood on the street out front of our house, he tried to get up afterwards, I didn't actually see it.

While checking the mail across the street one evening a car piled in deer carcasses backed out of my neighbors driveway, I saw it all lit up by the brakes.

Driving home from picking up Chinese food they fought so much he took the bag of dinner and threw it out of the window, I saw that in slow motion, and I smelled it, there was no escaping hearing it either, the fighting.

For Christmas my mom got my stepdad a vcr to replace the betamax, but it sat in the bathroom closet in a black trash bag, i thought it was a dead body nestled behind the dirty clothes hamper, but I imagined that.

I swam as far out into the ocean as i could until the lifeguards whistled and the adrenaline would catapult me to shore..

We had a dog named Mingo and he attacked one of my sisters friends at the White Hen.

My grandfather came to visit, he tap-tap-tapped his pipe out on the deck and ash hit me right in the eye, in a picture at the beach he has his hands around my waist.

I caught an assault scene from an R rated movie sitting on the living room floor and slept with my covers covering me and only a crack against the wall open to breath, swearing i could hear another breath, probably under my bed.

If you want to call your parents you can but I don't see what the big deal is, they fight like this all the time.

I'll take a number 3 with a diet coke.

Do you need a napkin?

The child is standing in front of screaming adults crying so hard no words will come out. She's looking up at chaos ears ringing eyes burning throat hot.

Does the child exist?"

-Erin M. Riley, 2020