Things That Keep Me

Holly Day
The Thing that Keeps Me

My earliest memory is of crawling to the edge of a cliff and seeing nothing but pink and blue clouds beneath me spreading so thick and solid they looked capable of holding me. My mother said she almost lost me that first camping trip in the Grand Canyon, she says she thought I was asleep and she turned her back for just a moment, just a moment and I was almost gone. She says this is why I’m so afraid of heights now, that my frantic parents’ reaction to my explorations of that cliff edge must have scarred me for life.

But in these memories of myself crawling quickly and purposefully toward my certain death I am full of giddy, infantile delight, and I don’t remember the terror of my parents’ disapproval, the panicked screaming and understandable overreacting which surely must have ruined the rest of that morning. Even now, when my stomach lurches when I step too close to a railing, or stop at some scenic overlook there’s a small part of me that’s convinced that instead of falling, I am meant to fly and the steady, adult reasoning that keeps me from testing this theory from hurtling over the edge and into the air is tenuous at best.

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