

Write Your Life

A micro memoir writing project

Write about a moment when one of your parents suddenly seemed like a stranger—in an interesting way.

Hey, That's My Mom!

That's my mother standing next to a seaplane. And next to a pilot, who's wearing a tan jacket, a bill cap, and aviator sunglasses. They're standing in the water, up to their knees in Lake Missaukee, like they're posing for a picture,

"Wanna fly, boys?" she says. "This is Ray. I knew Ray when I was a girl."

"High school," he says. "Merritt."

We climb up onto one of the pontoons and into the backseat of the plane. We're little guys, elementary school age. There's barely room for the two of us back there.

Ray looks at us over his shoulder, asks if we're all right.

Are we? I've never been up in an airplane. And I've never seen my mother so familiar with a man I don't know.

He starts the engine. It rises from a hum to a whine to a low-level roar. The propeller flattens and wrinkles the water as we begin to accelerate. Pointed at the deep water we gain speed and rise gently into the sky. Below us, I can make out the beach where we were just swimming, the red disk of a merry-go-round on playground, and further back from the lake front the park where our house trailer sits for 4-6 weeks in the summer, while my mother is off from school and my brother and I need something to do. My brother points. "Is that us?" he says. Meaning our trailer. In the town of Lake City, which we look down on as Ray makes a long curving turn, I wonder which house is our Aunt Jean's, my mother's sister. Her house, which she lives in with my cousins and her husband, whom we call Uncle Junior, is attached to the jail. Uncle Junior—his real name is Hartley—is the county sheriff. He wears a brown shirt with a badge and is gone most of the time. Around their house a few trustees roam freely and do errands.

It's a short ride. Ray brings us down and lands the plane. It skids across the water's surface and finally comes to a stop where he picked us up.

"Did you enjoy that?" my mother asks us later. We say we did. We really did.

"Well I was terrified," she says.