

Between One and Two

She was a little girl between the ages of one and two. She had learned how to stand on her own, keeping her balance, but when she walked she still was aware that the ground could rush up at her unexpectedly. So she just stood, comfortable with being still and keeping her balance. She was all wrapped up for winter weather in a little jacket that had a hood, and the hood covered her ears. Maybe that was why she was so intent on the view in front of her, because she was not distracted by sound. All she was aware of was what she could see.

The view in front of her was green, everywhere was green. She was in the country, standing at the edge of a little footbridge. The bridge spanned a gully, but there was no water in the gully. It was dry and only a couple of feet deep. The bridge was made of wood, weathered wood, the kind that was built for foot traffic. It was not made for anything as heavy as automobiles.

There were no people within sight. She was alone. There might be people farther away, who were keeping an eye on her, but she was not aware of them. She had never been exposed to this view before, so everything she saw was new. Brand new. The pastures that stretched out for miles in front of her, covered in winter grass, that was new. And the stone humps that held the thick, smooth, rust-colored chains that stretched across the bridge on each side were new. The chains were not very high, but they suggested to the traveler the location of the sides of the bridge.

Way off in the distance she could see the white and grey-blue slopes of mountains, a long string of what looked like low, continuous hills. The scene was quiet, no animals moved around in those pastures. All the blades of grass were coated lightly with white. The white coating sparkled here and there.

She felt her aloneness settle over her, just like the white coating that had settled on the blades of grass at her feet.

Cynthia Vautier
January 10, 2017