

Tomiko would get lost at work. Her job was to place the mirror into each camera with gloved fingers, making sure there were no spots on the mirror when the camera left her hands. She had been working at the Mamiya factory since high school and had been able to move to more delicate work as she had proven her ability to work consistently and accurately without losing focus for long hours. But she did lose her focus. All the time. But her mind and hands and eyes were smart enough to work automatically for her, doing the monotonous tasks over and over each day, while she shifted into other thoughts.

Fortunately, they had a radio on where she worked, where she could hear modern music and spots of news. This was 1968, and over the years she had become more and more concerned about the conflict in Vietnam, as it spiraled into darkness without seeming to have an end. She would think equally about all of the people experiencing the war and it was just painful, no matter how she looked at it. She especially would think of the civilians trying to live their lives and the U.S. servicemen – so young! Who were shipped in and seemed to die so quickly. She would see them on television at night and their faces were numb with shock.

One day that summer, she was at work and listening to the radio when a news flash came with an update from the war in Vietnam. She had been listening to a song by the Beach Boys and it was so new she didn't know its name, and didn't understand the words, but she had been thinking about what it must be like to live in California, how sunny and bright it must be. And then the news from Vietnam startled her and all the sun went out of her. She was putting a mirror into a camera as usual and became aware of her every movement. A wave of pain rushed through her and it was everything she could do to not break into tears and cry like a child, without restraint. What would the others think? She caught herself in time, but the tears came rolling down as she slowly slid the mirror into place and tightened it. She held the camera in her hands for a moment before passing it on. Cameras were for recording moments of light, she thought, and then she remembered also photographs she had seen from the war. For a moment she couldn't move. One of her friends looked up at her briefly and then looked down. No one liked to hear the news from Vietnam. No one really liked talking about it at this point. It was hopeless. She passed the camera on.

Larry would look at the picture of his wife Kathleen every night for hours before going to sleep. She no longer seemed real, but like some sort of angel. His senses were so shattered now that he could only focus on what was before him. What the orders were, steel himself, not feel. At night he would write to her, or reread her letters and then stare at her picture until sleep came to him. When he awoke in the morning, her picture would still be in his hand.

Kathleen would write to him about how she was coming along with her pregnancy. She was due soon and he was worried about her because she had been really uncomfortable in the heat of summer, but she was staying with his mother Margaret and he knew his Mother was taking the best care of her. He could see them in the kitchen,

with the light streaming in all day, talking and having coffee, a neighbor coming over to see how things were going, or in the afternoon, shelling peas or snapping beans for supper. Kathleen would write to him about preparing the baby's room and every little detail was precious to him. He wanted to be home so badly. He couldn't describe to her anything about what was happening, what had happened to him since his tour had started, how he had changed. He didn't want to worry her and only wrote to her about how much he loved her, what he wanted to do for her when he got back, his excitement about the baby, what he wanted to do with the baby if it was a son, if it was a daughter.

Kathleen had given him a pocket calendar before he went, with every day of his tour numbered right up until the end, with the baby's due date, with notes here and there, his birthday and her birthday marked. He took it everywhere he went, and every day marked through another square. Every day it seemed like someone in the unit was killed, or wounded, so much so that if something wasn't going horribly wrong it didn't seem right. That's why Kathleen and home and who he had been before didn't seem real anymore. He would write to her about the future but he couldn't touch it. He could no longer imagine that it would happen, but he wrote about it every night for her, because if she believed it could happen, it could. If Kathleen believed it, it would happen.

They gave everyone some R&R time after an offensive that cost the unit a lot of lives and shattered everyone's spirits. They were allowed to take shifts of R&R to Tokyo for a few days and he was in the first group to go. They went out in a group and most of the guys got lost in ways that he didn't want to, so he would leave them and go to bed early, and kept to his routine of writing Kathleen. Then in the morning while everyone else was sleeping it off, he would explore the city and wonder at the difference in culture, sometimes stopping and staring at something simple, like a child and her mother, or a color, a leaf, or a store window. One thing that kept him focused was to search for something that he could send Kathleen from his trip and looked and looked for just the right thing. Finally he set his mind on making one big purchase instead of several small ones, something that they could also share when he made it home, for years to come: a camera.

Once he had decided, he went to a few camera stores, looking for the right model, the right features, even the way it felt in his hand. He would know it was the right one when it felt right. He settled on a Mamiya Sekor DTL 1000, in part because it had a self-timer, so he could take pictures of himself for her and send the first roll of film with the camera for her to develop. She could do the same once the baby was born, and he imagined her setting the timer, and then running to be beside his Mother holding his baby, their son, their daughter. His head spun. He bought the camera and a roll of film and left the store.

He bought some noodles with shrimp and green onion, something to drink and went to the park where he had seen the most families with their children. That is where he wanted to be most, but also where it hurt the most to be. He read the manual while he started eating lunch, going first to the self-timer section, until he had figured it out. He loaded the roll of film and set the timer, then ran to the place where he was eating his lunch and had just enough time to lift a forkful of noodles to his mouth with a silly grin.

After the camera clicked, he was filled for a while with the thought of what it would be like to be with Kathleen again, just eating in the park, feeling the sun, just that. He

wondered where the silly grin had come from, because it was gone. He could only feel the sun, and hear the voices of families around him, and he got lost in space, finishing his lunch without tasting it anymore. He spent the rest of the day around town, taking Kathleen to places he liked, posing here and there, sometimes with friendly passersby, until he was down to the last frame.

He wanted her to know how he really felt, thinking about how long it would be before they saw each other, how worried he was about her, how much he loved and missed holding her each night. He felt that since in the rest of the pictures he was smiling, he could allow just this last one to be real. He went back to the park where he had started. The sun was beginning to go down and there were fewer families there now. He sat down on the same bench and thought. Everything rushed in him, all his feelings and fears and time seemed to be crushing him. The sun was going down too quickly. He pulled out the calendar Kathleen had given him and put his finger on the last day of his tour. He set the camera on the low wall by the bench and rushed back to open the calendar in front of his chest with the index of his left hand pointing to the last square she had marked for him. He had no idea what he looked like in that picture, but she would know him well enough to see all that he was feeling when the timer stopped and the shutter snapped.

He sat in the park for a long time, until the sun had gone down, the families had gone home, the lovers had started to arrive, and the air had started to become cool. He couldn't bear any more and went for his last dinner on R&R. After dinner he stopped and bought a small bottle of whiskey. He followed his same routine, but when it was time to write to Kathleen, this time he poured his soul out with everything he felt. Everything except his fear that he would not make it back to her, everything except what it was really like to be in Vietnam, what it was like to know that he was going back into hell again without her. And then, as usual, he fell asleep staring at her picture in his hand.

The next morning he packaged up everything and mailed it to Kathleen. Then everyone checked out of the hotel and they were on their way back to Vietnam.

Kathleen also had her daily rituals. She would spend her days keeping herself together and checking with Margaret about every little thing she felt that had to do with the pregnancy, to make sure nothing was wrong. When the day was done, they would eat dinner together quietly, and then Kathleen would go and sit on the front porch and read Larry's letters, rocking herself on the porch swing while the bugs buzzed around the porchlight. Then she would go in and write a new letter to him, seal it, stamp it and walk it out to the mail box for the postman, lifting the red flag on the mailbox.

The summer had been hard and she had been in a lot of pain and she tried not to write about it too much but it was a fact of life and she did let Larry know a little of what she was feeling. She felt like every step was weighing her down and she had to stop a lot to catch her breath. She didn't know what she would do without Margaret being there, since she seemed to know everything about having babies, and she was a great comfort to her. But still sometimes everything was overwhelming and she missed Larry so much and was so worried about what it was like for him there that she would be filled with fear until she could only cry.

The baby would get quiet and she would put her arms or hands on her belly and hold or stroke it, rocking herself and the baby until she could be calm again. It was all she could do sometimes to hold it together. Margaret knew what it was like because she had been alone with her babies when Larry's Dad was in WWII, but that was a different war. At least this time there was a limit – there was a day for Larry to come home that she already knew. She had a calendar too, and would mark off each day just like Larry did, and gaze at that last day to try to make it come sooner. It felt very far away.

One day the postman rang and scared she and Margaret to death, but it was the postman, not a stranger. He had the package from Larry and she brought it inside to open with Margaret. She was ecstatic to find out it was a camera and that there was a roll of film in an envelope marked "The First Roll's On Me". After lunch, she and Margaret dropped the film off to be developed. She could see that the letter Larry had sent with it was thicker than usual. As usual, after dinner, she went outside to the front porch swing with her stack of letters tied with a ribbon and a glass of iced tea. She opened the envelope and could see immediately from the handwriting that Larry had been upset when he wrote it and she started to cry as she read it.

She had to stop many times while she read the letter to let herself cry and then wait for her breathing to even out again and her eyes to clear enough so she could read some more. She had known that he had been sparing her, that he was still sparing her when he wrote her each night, the same way that she was sparing him her pain, her fears. She could feel how much he was hurting, as if she could feel him next to her across all that time since he'd written it, and since it had reached her, across the continent, the ocean and right to where he was now in Vietnam.

Margaret never interrupted Kathleen's time on the porch each night, because it would be like interrupting Larry and Kathleen if they were actually sitting on the swing together. She had been watching the news on tv, with the footage from Vietnam, like she did each night, which was her time of being with and thinking of Larry. She could hear Kathleen crying on the porch and she cried herself, although Margaret cried every night watching the news anyway. After the news was over and it switched over into light programming, Kathleen was still on the porch crying. She listened and waited for her to stop crying, and she would for a few minutes and then start again.

Eventually Kathleen stopped crying and it was quiet for about thirty minutes and it got dark outside. She would usually come in by now. It had been a long time now that Margaret herself had stopped crying and she felt like she could offer some strength and comfort to Kathleen. She went to the screen door and looked through, to see Kathleen on the swing, but not rocking herself like she usually did when she was comforting herself and the baby. Instead she was just staring at the bottom of the porch rail, not moving, expressionless.

Margaret cleared her throat and opened the screen door slowly and then caught it behind herself so it wouldn't slam. Kathleen didn't move but said, "Hey." Her voice was ragged and cracked when she said it. Margaret eased onto the swing beside her, not knowing what Kathleen really needed. Kathleen handed the letter to Margaret. It was her turn to cry while she read, while Kathleen began rocking all three of them, but no longer crying herself. When Margaret was done reading, she looked up at Kathleen and when their eyes met, they both started crying again and hugged each other until their crying stopped. They stayed up for a long time talking and rocking until there was

nothing left to say. Then they went in. In their separate daily rituals, they washed the salt off their faces, and the sweat off their bodies from the heat of the summer day. In her bed, Margaret tried to sleep. In her bedroom, Kathleen started writing, reading the letter, then writing more, pouring her soul back out in return to Larry.

When the film was developed she and Margaret waited until they got home to look at it, on the porch in the afternoon sun. It was so good to see him again but of course they couldn't help but cry to see even the pictures where he smiled because he looked very thin and tired circles were worn blue creases under his eyes. When they reached the last picture of course they cried again, because they knew he had written the letter after that.

Kathleen and Margaret went out to the park and different places around town, places that Larry and Kathleen and Margaret had memories of, the ice cream store, the moviehouse, the place where he had bought his first car, the high school, the church, and then the park. At each place Margaret would set the timer and then run back to Kathleen's side, until they too reached the last frame. But this time Kathleen sat in the sun with her calendar pointing to the last day, just like Larry had, except with her right hand on her belly, with tears streaming down her face and the best smile she could manage through all of that, while Margaret held her own tears back so she could take the picture for them. They too sat in the sun as long as they could, until they started to get hungry for dinner, before the sun went down. They got the pictures developed and sent them on to Larry.

After that, the letters evened out again, getting back to daily records and thoughts that were marking the time, back to the normal rituals. Fall came and Kathleen started bundling up and had to move her after dinner reading indoors, but not in the room where the news was on each night. She would stay in the kitchen after helping clean up and make some hot tea. There were two piles of letters now from Larry, two ribbons. She couldn't stay up for very long now and would write her letters back to him in the morning.

Kathleen had their baby just fine. Larry and Kathleen now had a healthy son. Margaret and Kathleen took pictures with and without the self-timer in the hospital for Larry. Kathleen and Larry had decided a long time ago that he would be named after both of their Fathers, with Larry's Dad's name first, then her Father's name in the middle of their shared last name: Matthew William Holloway. Margaret got as close as she could to Matthew with the camera and still focus so Larry would be able to see his features in the picture. When Kathleen was feeling well enough to go home they took pictures of all of them and of her nursing Matthew, of Matthew holding her finger, of Matthew asleep. They sent the prints off to Larry as soon as they were developed, and then made another set for themselves.

One morning a few months later, when she was writing her letter to Larry in the kitchen as usual, the doorbell rang and it scared she and Margaret to death, but this time it was a stranger with military insignia and a long face and a letter in his hand. Larry had been killed in action. For a few days after that, his nightly letters continued to arrive, and then they stopped too.

Everyone gathered around the family from their neighborhood, and their church, Larry's friends, Kathleen's friends, Margaret's friends. They brought more food than could be

eaten, until it was spoiling in the kitchen, but the friends and neighbors helped clean up and helped with Matthew. And then Larry's body came home and there was the funeral and it all started again with food and visitors until there seemed no end to tears and then there was an end to tears. Months later Kathleen found herself rocking Matthew silently on the porch swing after dinner because it was warming up enough and she felt like she was alive again, just barely, just barely.

The next day she pulled out the camera Larry had sent them, because they hadn't been able to bear taking pictures with it anymore since he had died. It was warm enough for it to be Spring again, although she didn't see how it was really possible for it to be Spring again. But she still bundled up Matthew just in case, knowing she could take off layers if he got hot, put him into the car seat carefully and went off to buy some film with the camera.

She drove to the park where she had taken that last picture for Larry and spread a blanket and a few toys for Matthew to chew on. She started focusing on Matthew through the camera and felt Larry's presence suddenly, as if they were both looking at their son. And of course she started crying. She missed him so. How was she going to raise Matthew to know Larry? How was she going to be alone every night without him to grow old with like they had always planned? Of course, of course, I'm crying, she thought. I'm always going to be crying now. Matthew looked up at her and reached out for her, as he'd learned to do, getting quiet. She picked him up and held him close and rocked him, until she was calmer and he began to shake the rattle. She put him back down. The sun felt good, but it felt false, like it couldn't be real. It felt like Larry touching her, holding her, warm and giving without question and without end, what it had felt like, endless. That wasn't real anymore, but it started to feel good again, like a dream.

She started to focus on Matthew again through the camera and taking pictures of him playing. As she focused to catch up with his moving features she felt Larry's presence again, which comforted her. It's the sun, she thought, but it feels good, and he would want to be here, we have to enjoy the sun again for Larry, Matthew, she thought. She took a break then to simply feel the sun and to imagine Larry with them, as if somehow she could dream him back into existence by her side. As if it was some kind of nightmare that he was gone, that he could really never really be gone. It helped her to imagine that he was with them, would be with them always. She could almost live that way, she thought, if she could only stay in the sun always to feel that giving warmth and light, and never be alone in the bed again at night, never see Matthew reach another milestone of growth and want Larry to share it, too.

She stayed in her delusion, because it comforted her, even though she knew it would fade when they got in the car, or maybe later that night. Why not hold Larry in this life while she could, even if she were only dreaming him? She lifted the camera again, and then put it down. She walked away from Matthew and set the timer solemnly and then ran back to his side, posing for the new family portrait. She heard it click and Matthew laughed, and she laughed and she ran to get the camera again, with a sense of life and happiness she hadn't felt since Matthew was born. She remembered how happy she and Larry were when they were first married, even though they knew he would leave for Vietnam soon. They had allowed themselves their happiness, as if there was no Vietnam between them and the rest of their lives.

She began taking pictures of Matthew again, even though they were redundant, the way that new parents will, in love with every movement of the child they have brought into the world, with fascination. But she had more and more trouble focusing with each shot, and she thought maybe she had smudged the lens with her fingerprints in her excitement, and carefully wiped it on her shirt. But when she focused again, there was still a shadow. The light fading? No, no clouds over the sun? She looked again, focused on Matthew's face, he moved toward the toy and looked up at her again, she focused again. The shadow again, so she focused on the shadow with her eyes this time. It was formless, but when she moved the camera, it stayed closed to Matthew. She focused and took the picture anyway. Again and again until the roll was taken. She had become quiet. She wondered if Larry was somehow with them.

This was a new experience. Something she had never thought or heard of before. Maybe she was losing her mind. Maybe somehow he was with them. She turned over each possibility until she was lost between the two. She straightened her logic, her feelings, her loss, Matthew, the park, her life, Larry is gone, she thought. But I feel him. I feel the sun. I feel him because I want to feel him. I feel him because he wants to be here with us. He is with us. Let him be with us if he can.

She felt lost, holding the camera, and watching Matthew so full of life, not knowing his Dad, not knowing that he would not know his Dad. If there was some way for Larry to be with them, she did not want to block him out because it didn't make sense, because it wasn't logical. He needed to be welcome to be with them in any way he could, no matter what. She looked through the lens again, this time focusing on the blue cloudless sky, away from the sun, a clear plain. She saw Larry's face in that last photograph, when he had his finger touching the last day of his tour of duty. She saw his face. She saw his face. It didn't make sense. But he was welcome. He was always welcome.

When Kathleen dropped off the film she took that day she wondered if she was going crazy again and handed the roll off to Jean as if it were a piece of magic. When it was time to pick them up her heart was beating all the way to the store, and she waited to look at the pictures until she could be with Margaret again. But there were no images on the film to show what she had seen. But also ever since that day, she had felt Larry's presence wherever she went, and she had begun talking him to her in her head, going over decisions, sharing excitement and joy about Matthew, at night when she was falling asleep and wishing for him, and when she touched herself and wanted it to be him touching her. It was a comfort, and she felt that it was somehow a comfort to him.

Kathleen learned over the years that she could focus even if there was a shadow in the camera, and that she could see and feel Larry's presence without the camera. When Matthew was in high school, she gave the camera to him to experiment with, and to see if he saw the shadow, and he happily went around town taking pictures of people and things he loved with it, but never mentioned a shadow, only difficulty focusing sometimes, so she knew, without telling him why.

When Matthew graduated from college she gave him Larry's Army pins and the camera, as well as some things he needed to start off in his own new home, practical things, fun things. She never remarried, because Larry was always with her, and she didn't feel alone, although she missed Larry terribly. He was with her. There could never be anyone else. His picture was now by her bedside along with a scrapbook of memories

and other photos of their time together, and another one for Matthew and life after Larry had died. Sometimes she would look through them, and sometimes she would look through the letters, but most nights she would snuggle up in the bed and look at Larry's picture until she would start to fall asleep and then turn the light out. Then she would imagine that he was warming her like the sun, with his arms around her.

Years later, Matthew had his own wife, his own children, and as happens with families whose children are growing, there came a time when the whole house felt cluttered with piles of things, and it was time, his wife announced, for a yard sale. Each member of the family took the next Friday night to go through all of their own stuff and find things that they were able to let go of, and for some reason, when Matthew's eyes fell upon the camera, he felt the need to let it go.

Maybe it was guilt, because his oldest child had done the unthinkable, as children often do, and had spilt root beer all over the camera while the lens was off one afternoon, and the root beer was hopelessly stuck all up inside the camera, all over the lens. The thought that his Mother would ever see it in this state, and that it could ever be repaired, overwhelmed him with guilt, and his reaction was to let it go, just let it go. Maybe someone else could spend the money to make it right, and maybe then it would still take pictures right, besides, it had always been faulty, and his Mother had been attached to it, but now, yes, it was hopeless. So, he put it in his box of things for the yard sale.

Marya pulled up in front of the old white house with the boxwoods in front, with that sense of excitement and wonder that always filled her upon finding a new yard sale. Each boxwood was covered with clothing spread out in the sun. She always looked at clothing first, but nothing fit her, so she moved on, sorting through box after box. In the middle of the yard was an old table with items of more value, a small wooden storage chest, older books in good condition, and a camera. She looked at the books but didn't feel drawn to any of the titles, and picked up the camera.

It was an old Mamiya and when she looked through the viewfinder she saw brown spots of liquid dried on the lens. She took off the lens, only to find the spots on the inside also. Still, she felt drawn to the camera, the weight of it in her hand, its chunkiness. It felt more real than some of the newest digital cameras. Maybe it was worth cleaning? It was marked 15 dollars and she asked the woman who was watching over the yard sale about it. "It looks like something was spilled on it", she said. "Yeah, that's my husband's camera. We haven't tried to have it cleaned, but I can mark it down to ten if you want. It might be worth a try." "Okay", Marya said, "I'll take it. I'll look around some more and then come back if you want to hold it until then." But she didn't see anything else she wanted and paid for the camera. It shook loosely in the case when she put it down on the seat, when she braked and turned corners.

Marya took it by a camera store the following Saturday and they told her about the model. It was a Mamiya Sekor 1000 DTL manufactured in Japan in 1968. If she could get it cleaned it was a really good find. They gave her the name of a man who could do miracles with old cameras. She called Mr. Forester that afternoon and took it to his home the next day.

He shook his head when he saw the dried liquid inside and outside of the camera. "What a shame", he said, "This is such a great camera. I'll do my best, but it's also missing a part on the bottom and it might take a while to find it. Is there any rush?"

"No", Marya said. "If it's not possible to fix it that's okay, it's just ten bucks." "I'll do my best", said Mr. Forrester, "It's worth a try."

A month and a half later Mr. Forrester called and said the camera was ready. He had been able to get the camera cleaned fairly easily but it had taken a while to find the missing part and get it repaired. "It was a real treat", he said. "I love this model. Let me know how the pictures turn out. I tested it around here a bit and it was fine. I also downloaded the manual from the web for you, so you can get to know how it works."

Marya began taking the camera with her on Saturdays while she ran her errands and followed yard sale signs in the neighborhood. After she was done one day, she stopped by the lake and went for a walk, with the camera. She was always seeing wildlife when she walked there and this time she might be able to capture it while she practiced taking pictures with the new camera. She took pictures of deer, geese, turtles, lizards and butterflies. Then she took a picture of the field near the parking lot, where a little boy was learning how to fly a kite with his father. That finished up the roll.

She got the film developed and looked at the prints at the counter, in case there were any duds she could didn't have to pay for. But she was disappointed to see a strange shadow on every print, and she asked the clerk, Jean, to look at them as she did, and Jean was perplexed also. "It may be that there was some internal damage to the camera that Mr. Forrester didn't catch," Jean said. "That's not like him, he's very thorough, and I'm sure he would have checked it out before he gave it back to you." "He did," Marya said, "He said he tested it and it was just fine."

And then Marya reached the last print of the father and son in the field. It was no longer a strange shadow in the print, but a solemn man in a military uniform, facing the father and son. His coloring was different from the fresh bright colors of the kite and the clothing of the little boy and his father. She showed it to Jean and neither of them knew what to say.

"Where'd you get the camera?", Jean asked. "At a yard sale," said Marya. They were both very quiet. "I'm going to take it back to Mr. Forrester and see what he says." Marya bought another roll of film. The next weekend Marya and Mr. Forrester pored over the prints, and he looked at the camera very carefully with every light and lens that he had but didn't see any signs of damage. He didn't know what to say either. "Mr. Forrester, I know this sounds strange, but weird things like this happen to me. I'm not sure what's going on with this, but I'm going to go back to the family that sold this to me and see if I can find anything else out about the history of this camera."

Marya took the camera back to the field where she had first taken the picture of the father and his little boy. No one was there, since it was late on a Sunday afternoon, which is what she wanted. She carefully focused the roll on the whole field. She could see nothing in the frames but the field. But she took the whole roll and then dropped it off with the same clerk to be developed. "Mr. Forrester didn't find out anything wrong with the camera," Marya told Jean. "Let's see what's on this roll."

When Marya went back to the store for the prints, Jean gave her a knowing glance and moved away to the far end of the counter so that they could look at the prints alone. Jean didn't say a word, but just watched Marya's face. The man from the last roll was there in the first print, in all the prints, except now he was looking at the camera. In

each frame he was coming closer and closer to Marya and the camera, until he was in close up. You could see tears shining in streaks on his face, silvery in the sunlight.

That weekend Marya went by the house where the yard sale had been and knocked on the door, with the camera in its case and the prints in her hands. There was no answer, but she could hear children playing inside and the TV, so she knocked again, louder. Eventually she heard steps on the other side of the door and a man answered. "Hello," he said, looking at her curiously. Marya didn't know what to say at first, but the man looked down at the camera in her hands and then invited her in.

When Matthew had looked at all the prints, he didn't know what to say to Marya. He was in shock to see his Father in them. He didn't know how it could be possible. Then he told Marya the story of the camera and how his Father had been lost in the Vietnam War, and he had only seen him in pictures. He told her he had seen the shadows in the camera and had always thought the camera was faulty, but that neither she nor his Mother had ever seen his image in the prints before. "What do you want to do?", Marya asked. "I'd like for you to meet my Mother," he said.

Matthew called Marya a few weeks later and asked if Marya could come by Thanksgiving Day, after lunch, to meet his Mother, Kathleen. He hadn't told her about what had happened, because he didn't know how she'd react and he wanted Marya to be there to explain what had happened. Marya left her parent's home after Thanksgiving dinner and pulled up in front of the old white house again. It was cold but the sky was a very bright blue. Matthew came to the door again, after the first knock. The children were playing with toys in front of the TV quietly and Matthew's wife and Kathleen were sitting on the couch. Kathleen looked puzzled but was polite when introduced to Marya. Matthew left the room and brought the camera and prints back to the couch and sat beside his Mother. "You're not going to believe this, Mom," and he handed her the two sets of prints.

Kathleen looked at the first roll patiently, and looked up at Marya, still not understanding what was going on, until she reached the last print of the first roll. Then she gasped and covered her mouth and stared at the print. "It's okay, Mom," Matthew said. "Marya bought the camera from us at a yard sale, which I'll explain later." He put his arm around her to give her a hug, and then opened the second set of prints for her and placed them in her hands.

Kathleen began crying and was unable to speak, her hands shaking as she looked at each print. Then she looked at Marya. "Of course I'm giving the camera back to the family," said Marya. "It is important for it to stay in your family." "Thank you," said Matthew. "I appreciate your understanding." No one really knew what to say, then they started asking questions slowly. How could this have happened? Why didn't this happen to the family before? Marya explained that when she touched things sometimes she would flash on their past histories, and this time she had touched on something deeper. "I've been thinking about this a lot," Marya said. "I wonder if you'll indulge me in an experiment."

The family gathered outside in the front yard under the big oak tree trunk while Marya took their portrait. Then, just Matthew, his wife and Kathleen, then just Matthew and Kathleen, then just Kathleen. The children didn't understand why the adults were crying, but by the end of the roll, the adults in the family felt as if they were looking

directly at Larry. Kathleen felt more strongly than ever that Larry was with her, his arm around her. Marya left the roll of film with the family to get developed, and wished them a Happy Thanksgiving. Kathleen hugged Marya for a long time before she could let go.

The following week Matthew invited Marya back over to see the prints. He opened the door before she knocked and grasped her hand excitedly and brought her into the living room where his wife and Kathleen sat. "We haven't shown the children yet, because we're still trying to figure out how to explain it to them, but take a look at these," Matthew said, handing her the prints. Marya began to smile when she saw the first print, where Larry indeed was in the family portrait, right behind Kathleen, with his arm around her, smiling softly. In each print he was interacting with them, and his smile became broader and broader, until the last frames, when he and Kathleen were alone, where he alternated between sad and happy, and in the last frame, he was kissing her cheek because she was crying.

Every year, Marya still goes over to see the family and share Thanksgiving afternoon with them, to take pictures for them. By now the children understand that their Grandfather is with them, and sometimes they can feel him tickling them. Kathleen knows that Larry never left her, and now she talks to him out loud, wherever she goes, and whispers to him each night, before she falls asleep.