



OUTSIDE
IN
LITERAR
Y &
TRAVEL
MAGAZI
NE

she remembers | shelby settles harper

I craved a cigarette and a glass of wine, red and full-bodied, with legs that clung to the glass. There it was again, an elbow from the inside, a reminder. Three pregnancies in six years, a husband stationed at embassies in two different countries, and I was tired.

I opened the patio door, smelled the rain. My thumb struck the lighter just as the neighbor waved through a kitchen window. I quickly stepped out of her view.

No place secluded but the small patch of side yard where we kept trashcans. The stench of dirty diapers, rotten eggs and soggy garlic almost gagged me. Finally alone, I inhaled the lit cigarette. I exhaled public service announcements and enjoyed the lovely rush of nicotine. The cabernet felt buttery on my tongue, warmed my insides.

I thought about Paul, working late again. Of long ago, meeting after work at a London pub, huddled so close I could smell the soap from his morning shower. Of trading stories after a long day at work, unable to make it past the living room of our flat with clothes intact. I tilted my wineglass upwards, towards the rain, and remembered.

ABOUT

ISSUE ONE

ISSUE TWO

ISSUE THREE

ISSUE FOUR

ISSUE FIVE

ISSUE SIX

ISSUE SEVEN

ISSUE EIGHT

ISSUE NINE

ISSUE TEN

ISSUE ELEVEN

ISSUE TWELVE

ISSUE

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