

PAUL HOSTOVSKY

DAYLIGHT

In the dream my son is a little boy again, and it feels like daylight savings time in the fall, when we all fall back. It's a bit of an adjustment, getting used to his tiny body again, which he had just finished growing out of. Home from college now, he's a toddler again (it makes sense in the dream) so we have to adjust all the clocks. And it feels strange picking him up and carrying him on one hip, and then the other, changing position like that, feeling his small bones on my big bones again. I ask him if he pooped, because it's our shared business again, and I can't help wondering at the imposition of it, like a curfew, though it's no imposition in the dream—I love it, I welcome it, like a time change in the spring when there's more time and there's more light, and it feels like the world is growing young again, though really it's just as old as ever, and growing older, and darker all the time.

POCKET COMB

When I found the complimentary black comb the school photographer gave to my son baring its pointy black teeth like pure evil among the toothbrushes, I was frightened because I didn't know where it came from or how it got into the house, sitting on the white bathroom sink, perfectly at home, smiling. Nothing prepares you for this—these invasions, these divisions of your home by the denominators your own child carries around in his pockets as smooth as stones. The magic of childhood is not knowing where you end and the world begins; is carrying pieces of the world around in your pocket like charms—a dead beetle, a harmonica, deciduous teeth, a complimentary black comb. The magic beans get planted in the most unlikely places, grow enormous and hairy in a bathroom in the time it takes to lift the seat, take out the garbage, tie a sneaker. One minute he's biting into the hypotenuse of an egg salad sandwich you cut diagonally in half for him, and the next thing his nipples and navel have formed a face, a mystic triangle, a man in the moon in the body, luminous and aloof, outstripping the clouds, following you over the earth.