



## HEATHER TOSTESON

### *SIBLINGS: Macrocosms and Pluriverse*

*Macrocosm: The whole of a complex structure, especially the world or universe, contrasted with a small or representative part of it.*

#### I

All our anthologies are both highly personal and composed almost entirely of the voices of strangers. I'm not sure what triggered the idea for this anthology, but I knew immediately that many people would find it as evocative as I did. It was only later that I realized that in all my own writing, I have never actually written about relationships between siblings, which is a little surprising since I have many and my relationships with the three I grew up with are complex. I use birth order often to understand how people function in the world and listen with interest as my friends and spouse and strangers on airplanes tell me about their own sibling bonds and schisms, and I share my own experiences, at length, as well. But the idea of this anthology wherever it came from, just the sensory intuitive *feel* of a macrocosm, not a story, not a relationship, a *macrocosm*, was liberating to me—as was the idea of exploring this experience openly with total strangers.

Another unanticipated result was that I suddenly felt truly free, after a hiatus of many years, to encounter again as a group all three siblings with whom I was raised. This was a spontaneous, not a deeply considered decision. Suddenly, one day it just wasn't a question or an intention. It was just flow. I knew I had a container for whatever responses I might have, which meant I had no need to reconcile my responses with theirs. My container was the call for the anthology itself and its audience—the world at large, or more exactly, the world of those who resonated with these questions, which didn't necessarily include, this probably goes without saying, my siblings themselves.

❖ *How much of the experience of our first macrocosm do we carry out into the world as part of our deepest, inchoate expectations of the world*