

Cassie Premo Steele

What I cannot tell you

is how your touch arrived with loss, how, looking at you, I had to look away from your father, and myself, and how we were never the same again. How your eyes became my focus, not his, not mine for him, how we were strangers to each other, connected only by the ribbon of your skin. I cannot tell you that nothing was as important, not my writing, not my politics, not my sex. I wanted to lose myself in you, abandon everything, be where you were, and live only through you, through who you were becoming. But I cannot tell you this. I will pretend that the love between us, your father and I, is as strong as ever, that we have grown in our love for each other because of you, and that it is better, but different, all the things that people say. And I will tell you that my writing did not change, except to get better, I was more in touch with my emotions, felt a sympathy with other mothers, all the things that women writers say. And I will tell you that I grew, too, became a different person, and this part will be true. I became the kind of person who can tell you lies and do it out of love, do it because the love I feel for you has changed everything.