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Exodus

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Exodus

We drift apart like continents. Our shores rearrange themselves in awkward lines, successive drafts in the revision of the world we made for ourselves. My mother drew maps for sixteen years, holding a magnifying glass in one hand and with the other tracing the signatures of the planet, rivers and railroads, highways and city limits. Now I can only imagine her hand brushing the erasures of our landscape, smoothing the fault lines between us just as she smoothed the pages of her bible every night, leafing through them by the moon at her nightstand. I think she would understand when I say that this parting is our Red Sea, the open gate to a wilderness we might walk forty years without a map, every inch at least a mile. Like Israelites we will wander the counties just outside the promised land, all the while asking what pillar of smoke led us here, how a rose can blossom into desert, or why we must be chosen but still lost.

—Michael Hicks

This poem won third place in the BYU Studies 2001 poetry contest.