

Mary and Eugene
Kristin Kozlowski

One hundred years ago, when my grandfather, Eugene, immigrated here, my house did not exist. This stub of concrete and wood that I call home, that I'm staring at and staring past, wasn't here, and this patch of grass that I'm lying on, looking at my house and past my house into the sky, wasn't here either. Before my house and town existed, this piece of earth that I call home was farmland, and in the warm months, errant bean plants poke through the soft soil as annual reminders of what came before my house and me. And before the farm, this land was part of the Great Plains. And if I were to lie on this same spot, beneath this same sky one hundred years ago, I might watch the golden heads of prairie grass—stalks taller than me—bow in the breeze, and the petals of white and violet flowers might close like eyelids against the setting sun. And Eugene, who lived in Chicago, in his own stub of concrete and wood, might be settling down for the evening, as twilight rang out with more finality when homes were lit by oil lamps.

Perhaps on this night, one hundred years ago, Eugene might pull Mary out of her own house to notice together the last stipe of pink in the sky, and he might point upward and say: *see how the night devours the day, and how the day accepts this*—only he might say this in Italian because he was still learning English. And Mary might reply in English because she was born in Chicago and liked to watch Eugene learn, or she might reply in Italian because she spoke her parents' language also, but she might say: *the night doesn't devour the day. The day runs away because she has many things to do. But day will meet night again in the morning, because she loves him.*

Kristin Kozlowski lives and works in the Midwest United States. Some of her work is available online or upcoming in the *Longleaf Review*, *Pidgeonholes*, *Occulum*, *Flash Frontier*, and others. She is currently and always working on a novel.