

Big Hills, Small **Mountains**

A selective collection of conversations that occurred within a 49 square mile township, close to where you are now, on May 12th, 1974, between 2:03 and 2:13 PM

By
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BIG HILLS, SMALL MOUNTAINS

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AUTHOR'S NOTES

Cast

There should be at least six actors to perform this play, but it could easily be many more.

Play Structure

The play does not have a pre-designated order. Just pull the monologues out one at a time and see where it goes, (as if you had a map of the township and you put your finger down in one spot and then one person would tell their story from their location in the township. Then, move on to another location and that person will tell their story. The monologues all work together and there will always be a beginning, middle and end, regardless of how they are configured. Conceptually this all occurs in a 10-minute span on May 12th, 1974, Each monologue is a hinge moment, a monumental turning point of realization, in each character's life. These moments can happen at any time, anywhere and can happen to anyone. Happy/Sad/Merry/Mad, hinges everywhere, when you move from one point of your life/phase/reality into the next one. Life is a series of hinges.

Keep it simple, an empty stage, with a pool of light that the characters can step in and out of. It is like being at a carnival, "Step right up, spin the wheel, everyone is a winner". Each hinge moment is in its own bubble

YW-young woman

YM-young man

MW- middle aged woman

MM- middle aged man

OW- old woman

OM- old man

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House lights off, the stage is black. Pools of light at random reveal the actors milling around the stage. The actors freeze in place, in light, and deliver the short readings. As the lines are read the actors mill around each other center stage, continuing as the final four actors end up in front and downstage. Note: In this opening montage some actors can be giving lines that are not from their own monologues.

ACTOR: 1 (YW). My County, January

ACTOR: 2 (YM). Between 2:03 and 2:13PM

ACTOR: 3 (MM). It's a job and there aren't many these days, well, I have been here 18 years, I don't feel like starting over. I mean, I could be a manager one day, maybe.

ACTOR: 4 (MW). You could roam around at your own pace; nothing would ever have to happen unless it fit into your scheme of things.

ACTOR: 5 (OM). My wife was in front of us and your husband was behind us, a group of friends chatting away.

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ACTOR: 6 (OW). When they asked me if I saw what happened, I said “No I didn’t see nothin”. I lied.

ACTOR: 3 (MM). That mistake will be his cigarette money for a month, or a week if the whole family smokes.

ACTOR: 2 (YM). So, by the time I was twelve, I could stay on top of a horse for a couple of hours. A twelve-year-old expert.

ACTOR: 6 (OW). If ya ever want to know what a person is really like, just take a look at their shoes.

ACTOR: 1 (YW). Some people have to be buzzed to just sit and watch something evolve, but anyone can sit and stare into a fire.

ACTOR: 4 (MW). What if there were unwanted thieves or murderers tucked away somewhere?

ACTOR: 5 (OM). When I came to, I was layin’ on top of the mailbox with my arm stuffed inside of it like some newspaper.

ACTOR: 3 (MM). He was late for class again, as usual, but we were ready this time, we had the whole thing planned out.

ACTOR: 6 (OW). That was our world, free to make it whatever we needed, no grown-ups.

ACTOR: 1 (YW). I am just not one of them and I never was, and I never will be. I just don’t get...it, the why or what or where of it.

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ACTOR: 4 (MW). I thought in the back of my head that something was being kept from me, that there was some sort of deep dark secret that I was not in on.

ACTOR: 5 (OM). I thought I would have to be drunk to let them put those needles to me, but it was not that bad.

ACTOR: 2 (YM). Why does this always happen to me? Stop lookin' at me...I'm no freak show. I am waiting for someone.

ACTOR: 6 (OW). What I am really thinking about is how people are remembered, in big chunks or lots of fragments...or to be more exact...how am I going to be remembered?

(Blackout)

THE MONOLOGUES

The actors can remain on stage as the monologues continue or sit with the audience or move offstage. Try to keep the atmosphere as informal as possible

TOWN – (YM-YW)

I can't wait to get out of this town. I don't belong here. There is a world out there...do things...big things...why do I have to wait for something to happen? I can't stay here and rot like everyone else. As soon as I am 18, I am leaving. Gone, the big goodbye, never to return. I will never come back here again. I want people to know me, not just the family I come from...oh don't you live on...

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or aren't you related to...I will not be defined by my family...I will define ME. I do not want to be my dad's daughter, or Gran Dad's granddaughter. I AM ME...LOOK AT ME. GOODBYE! I mean I will visit the old folks and be nice to them. Everyone else can kiss my Bingo, Goodbye.

'Ja HEAR – (MW-MM)

Did ja 'hear about the farmer who wanted to milk his cow... and couldn't... All he had was was a bucket with a hole in the bottom. Ya might say times are hard...or times have been better, if you're an optimist.

TIME – (OM-OW)

I've lived here, hereabouts, all my life, near as I can figure. These eyes have seen across too many generations. If I close my eyes, I can still see my Great Gran Dad milkin' the cows before the sun went down. If I close my eyes. Must have been about 4 years old. He'd say, "come over here shorty". I knew he would try and squirt me with the milk from that cow's teat. I'd walk over anyway and get squirted. It made Great Gran Dad feel good. He needed to do that... I needed to do it too, for him...I was the same age as my youngest gran son now, and I know just what he needs! And I need a cow...

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HATE – (YM-YW)

(as if looking into a mirror) I hate school...I hate my brothers...I hate my friends. Everything is stupid...And I am stupid because I am sitting here talking to myself, saying things I already know. I hate...ME! You look cool when you get mad.

LOOKIN' DOWN AT THINGS — (YM-YW)

If ya ever want to know what a person is really like, just take a look at their shoes. No shit, ya can tell right off what that person is made of. Look at me...boots...riding heels, scuffed and need polish, not that I ever use the stuff. What does that tell ya... it says I am a booter, a workin' stiff, my nose ain't out of joint. I'd give you the shirt off my back if ya needed it, and I would give you a knuckle sandwich if ya rub me wrong. Simple, the boots say it all, it's all there. Now you take someone who wears, uh... those things with...sandals, yeah that's it. Their feet are dirty, don't get washed all that often I reckon'. I mean, look anyone can get dirty in the course of a working day, ya know, when ya work, ya tend to get dirty. But people who wear sandals don't do that kind of work, really. They just walk in dirt, all freakin' day. They must never even look down at themselves, shit. I don' usually hang with people who wear sandals, and I don't really like flirtin' them either, unless they wash first...but it's not easy tellin' someone you don't know

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all that well, no matter how well...well, that you need them to wash up some, at least their feet. So, I never usually hang with them unless, they know, you know, to wash first. And did ever see someone with white shoes, spic and span, like brand new, really white? So white ya gotta squint your eyes to look at um? So ya say to them, 'brand new shoes', and then they cross their legs or something and ya see the bottom of the shoe and either the sole is worn and not having any grooves, or the heel is worn down and showing to colors where all the weight goes and where it doesn't. Then, ya realize that person keeps them shoes clean. Shit, what kind of person keeps shoes that clean? Spend more time cleanin' than wearin'. Makes ya wonder what else they do, that they needn't have to. I mean what else are they polishin'? Not a pretty picture. Shit, people with whitey tightly shoes are creepy. And sneaker people...shiiiiit...did you ever see so many sneaker people. Eat me alive... sneaker people. They are wishy washy folks, don't know what they want to be, don't take chances, just wear sneakers once and ya'll know what I am talkin' about. And suede sneakers, give me a break...ya know what that means, they want to be a booter, down to earth, but they don't know how...really...BUY BOOTS. Those sneakers with strips, same as white shoes. Black shoes-brown shoes, boring. Sneakers that look like netting, same as sandals, but they hide the dirt better. An then

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there are those any sex kind of shoes, I am not even going there. Shit you want to know somethin' about someone, just look down...it works every time. What are you looking at your feet for? Forget what they look like, I saw what you're wearing.

ANOTHER DAY —(OM-OW)

Sometimes I wonder about things...different things...I get caught up in a thought and I am there for a while. I don't know where the time goes...Next thing I know someone says, "hey you, lost or somethin'...Solving the world's problems, are you?" ...you know. It seems like daydreaming, but it isn't. I am not dreaming about anything, just running things through my mind. Just the other day my manager dressed me down for not shipping a package to a customer...I work at the mall outside of town...I just missed it. I didn't have a shipping order on it, just a call that it needed to be done ASAP. It was not documented and I forgot to put it on the out board because I did not write it down after the call. It was busy that day. So, Micky, my manager yells at me and says I am always fucking things up and I should be fired because I am always makin' 'm look bad. Said I was useless. So, all afternoon I am thinkin' about what I should have said back... I should have said, "if you had done the shipping order, it would have

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gone out. You are not doing your job. It is your fault, and you should get fired”. I didn’t mess it up, forgot the procedure, and so the package will go out tomorrow. There are only four to five hundred packages laying around here every day and five documents per package, and they keep adding more stuff to go into the forms every week. We used to do this by hand with two pieces of paper. Now we have computers, but I swear that it was easier before. How can I remember one undocumented package when there are over four hundred documented ones? All of the pick-ups happen at the same time. Damn, you sit around all morning, stacking and sorting and BAM, it all goes out at once. And the drivers get pissed if we slow them down and mess with their schedule. Oh wait, I have one more package I forgot about, hold on, yeah right, that’s going to happen...not. So, the next day I could not get out of my mind what I should have said and why I didn’t say it. There were lots of things I could...I could have quit! I always think that. Its a job and there aren’t many these days, well, I have been here 18 years, I don’t feel like starting over. I mean, I could be manager one day, maybe. And I am not sure it would be any better, other than the pay. I have had three worse jobs than this one. First two I was fired, the other one I quit. Not much to look forward to if I quit this one. It’s a bad attitude to pack around, but it’s all I got. I try to think of something

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I would like to do...and all I come up with is the lottery, win the lottery. I would forget this job in a minute, if not sooner. I would do nothing for the rest of my life...right. The money would be nice, and I would find plenty of things to do, but there is a flaw to the plan. See, I have no purpose in life now. And being rich would be OK, but I would still have no purpose. And if you have no purpose, you are lost...and if you are lost, you are a loser. Most people I know are the same way. They have their days and their nights...some better than the others. See, I wish I had a daydream I could go to instead of just mulling things over. Cause a daydream means you can create hope... Damn, then it hit me...if I could pick something to be my purpose, I could dream about it and if I it might become a hope. So, I said to myself, _____, make something your purpose and stick with it until you believe it and turn it into a dream and find hope, then and only then will you win the lottery. There is something I can do that is better than this job. Now that is something to hope for, I feel better already. I need a lottery ticket.

LUNCH TIME — (YW-MW-OW)

Why is it, that every time I get a few moments for myself, that wherever I go to do this whatever, that the people who are supposed to help me, serve me, and do something for me, ARE ON LUNCH BREAK? If they

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are courteous, they put up a sign that says be right back! Do you have any idea of how often I get a chance to do something for myself? Yeah, about that often. So why is my time off always everyone else's time off too? I mean, what are the chances, right? And I have the same time off every day, so if I return the next day, the same thing is going to happen again, right? This is not fair. It is just a question of time before the next mishap. why am I obsessed with time...why? A diamond does not have to think about time...I respect diamonds a lot, I work in the diamond district...as a custodian ...it was once a piece of black carbon, coal, and it waited an eternity to turn clear...I mean superman once put a piece of coal in his hand and squeezed real hard and BAM, look it's a diamond! It is a nice visual, but really, it takes a lot longer, believe you me. So now, what if there was no such thing as time... as we know it? Things would only depend on what you made time out to be...individual timetables revolving around just you, so things would get done when you needed them to be done. Now this would mean everyone had their own reality and everything would adjust accordingly. There would not only be forward movement, but anything that suited you...forward, backwards, left, right, sideways or up and down. Infinite possibilities. Maybe need a compass to find your way back again. Not that you would have any reason...I mean you could roam around

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at your own pace, nothing would ever have to happen unless it fit into your scheme of things. Your life would be like a dream, nothing would happen unless you wanted it to happen and you're the one who makes things happen. You could go backwards in time and keep going over a segment, relive it until you get it right...perfect. Close enough anyway. Or you could skip over stuff that was not interesting, move on too...but only if you had total control...maybe we do...free will... things that will last from forever and to forever is, (actor claps), this. There is no way to comprehend infinity unless you can define time, which...crap, lunch time is over...again. Now I am going to have to come here tomorrow and try to take care of this, again!

BROOKBYERS BARN — (OM-OW-MM-MW)

Sheee...it. I've done that before. Did it before I was eleven...I'll bet I know something you never-ever done before. I'll bet you never waved a red rag in front of a bull in heat. Sheee...it. You better know which way is up when you wave a red rag in front of a bull in heat. Bulls do also get into heats, I know, I've seen it lots of times. I've done a lot of things in my life. I've done a lot of things nobody else is ever gonna do. Sheee...it. I bet I have done things that I almost forgot about by now... Here's somethin' for example that I almost forgot about. I almost forgot about it 'til just now. Setting fire to old

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man Brookbuyers barn. I didn't set no fire, you crazy...I just watched it happen. Do I look like a fire bug to you? I should hope not. I just watched it happen. Jeffery Brookbuyer, the middle son of old man Brookmyer set the fire. I only just dared him to do it. He didn't have to do the dare. I could have double dared him, then he'd a had to do the dare and start the fire no matter what. I only dared him. He started it all by himself. It was just some old hat in the corner that he put a match to. We didn't think it was going to get that big that fast. it was some sight. When they asked me if I saw what happened, I said "No I didn't see nothin". (I lied) Hell I wasn't going to tell them about the dare and Jeffery and the whole thing and how we just ran. We may have been a little wild, but not stupid. I can talk about it now, it's alright, because everyone who cared about that damn barn is dead now. Just an old barn anyhow. No livestock in it, just old hay, and sour hay at that. It made one big fire...boy, did it make one big fire. I dare you to remember somethin' bigger than that...

THE REAL ME — (MM-MW-OM-OW)

I had a 1954 Chevy once. I like to think of it as my first car, but it wasn't. It was my second car. My first car was just a car, not a love affair. My second car was a love affair. Two door sedan, maroon, baby moons, three speed on the column, but I changed that ... bought a

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floor conversion kit...didn't make it go any faster, but it looked coool and it felt coool. It only had a six cylinder, but I got some volume out of it by punching some holes in the muffler, ooaa it made some sweet sounds. I was just a kid ya know, but me and the car were made for each other. I would slide into it and turn the radio on, I cut a hole in the shelf being the back seat and wired up a second speaker, cool huh, and let it rip. I really knew who I was, I was complete when I was alone or with my my buddies, or girlfriends...or... I was the center of everything...it was the closest I ever got to being prose you know... free form, no limits. It was the first time I had control of my independence; I was secure. Being a teenager was not great for me. I felt like I didn't fit in with anyone, I had friends and all, but that car became my armor, my uniform, my confessor, my soul mate... no questions asked. All I had to do was get in and close the door. I made a lot of promises to that car...I saw it in all of its glory, and I knew, I knew that I could resurrect it and bring it back. I would do it a little bit at a time so as not to alarm people. New seat covers, the chrome refinished, new tires...matching...I could see it all. When you are in love, you make promises, promises that have consequences. I would promise it anything, it meant that much to me. I used to LOVE to wash that car...it was the only time it would shine...when it was wet. The brake pedal was worn

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down on the right-hand side, the turn signal didn't pop back automatically, and it only smelled good to me. I don't remember who my teachers' names were in High School...forgotten. I only remember half of these kids I went to school with. What I do remember though... I still think about that car. Look, like when I went to a football game I would pull into the parking lot, a little too fast and then park away from all of the other cars. Then I have to walk away, strutting, to get to everyone else. Dig. Walk around, watch some plays, converse, be seen. Then go back to the car...sit for a while,,see who followed and then wonder what to do next. There are some songs I here on the radio now...now they call them oldies', and I am back in that car, in the '54 Chevy listening to that song... I can still remember seeing my car from my window in my room, parked on the grass, or snow...and dream of all the places we would go. I was whole. It was the first time that I was big and the world was small. Inside my car. Well, it didn't last forever...on February 24th, 1966, on a turn that was iced over we skidded and hit a tree. Bent the frame...totaled. Me too, totaled, I cried all night... when no one was looking. I lost my best friend because of some water, water that froze...so simple, so final...nothing I could say, do or think would change what happened. I got a '57 Oldsmobile after that, it was faster, but it was not the same. It did not protect me form the rest of the world as

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well as the chevy did, although it tried. It was not as unique...it wasn't me.

THE DREAM — (MW-MM-OW-OM)

I had a dream about you last night, we were walking home from a show or movie or something. We were in a Boston suburb with those old, storied stone and brick houses where you lived. My wife was in front of us and your husband was behind us walking with others in our group of friends chatting away. There was a light fog in the air, and we were talking about our parents, who in the dream had already passed on and you asked me what I told the children when they died. I took a moment, not wanting to get trapped in that moment in time and I separated the two and spoke the words, “they have moved on to another place where they can be, forever, with us and we can be with them... forever, without ever having to miss each other...forever. You laughed and said my father was a big burley man who smoked too much. I agreed and reminded you that even though you thought he was Irish, but he wasn't. He just dropped dead one afternoon... happy. You had just written a book about your father. Our parents were a living part of our relationship, even though they were never an actual part of our friendship. That is what we were thinking, but not speaking, we did not need to talk to understand each other. Then I lifted up, off the ground and floated

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above our group and announced that I was going to fly the rest of the way to your place, and the others all laughed and called me lazy for not walking, you laughed too. Then you said you were coming up also, it had been a while since you traveled that way, but it would be fun and besides the ground was wet. The others laughed even more calling you lazy and scared of a little bit of water. we all laughed. We were weaving, wandering our way, above the others around and over trees, and I started to tell you about my mother, after my father died, and her empty days, that she filled with friends. She worried about one old friend in particular who she had known for over 50 years, who would take her out for lunch, dinner and rides around the valley they lived in...sometimes even visiting his wife who was in a nursing home. She was there because she got lost inside of herself. My mother worried that the neighbors would gossip about them spending so much time together. It might be disrespectful to their spouses. No amount of humoring, teasing or reassuring my mother could get her to relax her code of loyalty, but she still found a clear path somehow to continue her afternoons with her best friend having rides and lunch. And before we knew it, floating on our backs, we arrived at your house, and we had to go back down to the ground and join the others. Of course, where we needed to land was wet and the grass was slippery. You slid on the grass and ran into a

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tree, which you grabbed and avoided the fall. I gracefully touched down and slipped and fell on my butt. I really did not want a wet bottom, but we laughed and walked over to the others, and I woke up. I am glad we had... took the time to reconnect...I miss you.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD — (YM-YW)

You know what I learned today? That we have more than one gene. I mean I always thought that there was this one identifying gene that marked us, made us look the way we are, you know. I am not good at science... or biology. It turns out it is like a combination thing, you know. So it starts with your parents, a 50/50 even split, more or less I figure. And here is the thing...they are 50/50 of their parents individual parents and 50/50 of which would be great grandparents as I figure it...and it keeps going on like that so that by the time it gets to me...I guess I have a bit of everyone in both of the families in me and in a way I guess we could be related to everyone in the world if you were so inclined to look back far enough. I am not that focused. Well, that seems to me to be a risky sort of business. What if there were unwanted thieves or murderers tucked away somewhere? How do they fit in and how much do I carry with me from them? One or two genes. Or... maybe a few more interesting genes are easier to think about, you follow? I like to think I am 50% mom and

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50% dad, even though I look more like one than the other. That's only on the outside, I like to think I am more like the other on the inside. See, I look more like my mother on the outside, but see these cheek bones, those are my fathers. My knees are my fathers too. So now I am thinking I go my exterior from my mother and my interior from my father, my hands don't look like anyone I know in our family, but they have to come from someone. And god are they uggggley. Someone from long ago had hands like these...mutant like... It probably took generations get rid of hands like these and then along comes me... the one who finds a place to highlight this gene, this single gene because I am the perfect host, the perfect match to highlight this stupid gene in me and I end up with... mutant hands...God why me? What are my maybe future kids hands going to look like? This is risky business. I want a boy and a girl, or two boys and three girls. It all depends on where I end up living. If I live in a city place, then a boy and a girl only, (it is dirty there I hear), but if I live away from the city, I can have 5 kids, because they will have more places to play at. So, in any case, I will have two kids, no matter what or where I live so everything is OK, and I can plan because I know they will happen for sure, you know. I would like them to both have red hair, but the only red hair in my family is from my father's grandfather, (my great grandfather), so my genes for red

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hair are pretty far back, but they are there! It would help I am told, if I marry someone with red hair or red hair in their immediate family, you know? I also want the kids to have green/blue eyes. That always makes someone with red hair look so, so...intense, you want to look right t them, you know? And they will grow up then and be unique and feel unique and be famous and do things and be happy. It is not so hard to have blue green eyes because mom has them and so does Uncle Bert on Dad's side...and Aunt Be a too! I could have had them, but I don't...but my kids won't have freckles either, because red hair and blue/green eyes and freckles look dumb. Even in the country they look dumb...and you cannot tan well with freckles, you just get MORE freckles! They cannot get these hands either. So, whoever I marry will have god looking hands, red hair, blue or green eyes and good-looking hands, I said that didn't I? I am not going to take any chances, because if I plan it right, I will have all of the ones lined up right and know how they can work and plan the combinations. It is like a math thing kind of, but I will know what my kids will look like...almost, I think... and that they will be...look better than me...and if they look better than me, they will feel good and be happy. That's all I want; I just want them to be happy... Otherwise why have kids? I wouldn't have kids if... and I will not get divorced like my parents did!

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RIDING HORSES — (MM)

Course I know how to ride a horse. Where I grew up there were only farms and farms all had horses. I started riding when I first started paying attention to girls. All the girls I went out with, well, who I actually could have a conversation with, is probably more accurate... which is where you start when you have a crush on someone. I liked them. Sometimes a lot. Anyways, these girls all had horses, they always had horses. There would be a little town surrounded by farms and then the next little town would pop up and it was surrounded by farms. and most of these farms had kids, some boys and some girls, we all knew each other. I was a town kid. They liked to come into town and do things and I liked going to the farm, to do things. Anyway, first it would be just us guys hanging out, but then, well, I discovered, you know, girls. Now the farm girls, back then, liked horses, it is a fact. And all they wanted from the time they could talk was a horse. Sometimes it would be a pony first, but the pony soon became a horse. They lived and breathed horses. Holy cow, us guys would run all over the place chasing the other animals, baiting them to chase us, daring stuff like that. The girls did not pay much attention to us, no how. Sooner or later, well 'ventually I started liking some of the girls and we would talk in school, and I would spend hours thinking of things to say the next day and just when to do it. I would try to

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work my way around to half working out an invite to get together on a Saturday or a vacation day. That way we could have more time to talk without the pressure of our friends teasing us. No, never on a Sunday, that was a church and family dinner day, never Sunday, well, maybe later when we were established Sundays would work. And we would be older too...maybe. I'd be hanging out at the farm and talking about anything to keep the silence from happening, while what I was really doing is planning how I could bump into her and touch her hand, accidentally speaking, and then she would smile and we...it never ever really quite happened that way. But I thought about it nevertheless, all the time. First the smile and then you carefully touch hands again and actually hold them together for a few seconds, maybe less...and out of nowhere a sudden passing kiss, short but sweet, a brush of cheeks, all known dreams confirmed, she liked me. But it never really happened. I mean, you think up all these reasons for deserving the kiss...for doing something great like; Keeping us from being trapped from an avalanche that we are about to be caught under or a huge flooding storm or a fast tornado. And from that little kiss there would come love and then we would be married and someday everyone would talk about how we met and how we started riding horses when we were kids and how I saved her life one day and how the whole town

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knew that we were forever. We were made for each other. Things happen fast when you are young and inexperienced... So, by the time I was twelve, I could stay on top of a horse for a couple of hours. A twelve year old expert. I was actually scared out of my wits, but my fantasies always kicked in, no pun intended, and keep me on the path, trail whatever. So this one Saturday, I went over to visit Sally Corbet and we had plans to go riding. She had two horses, (I dreamed of one horse 'cause then we could ride together, front and back holding on to...that never happened either), so now I am thinking about how it would look if we were to ride and hold hands at the same time, because no one would see us doing it. So Sally and I got the horses saddles, (her father did the cinches), though Sally like riding bareback better as she told me 5 times already, when one of the worst things that ever happened to me happened. I walked to the front of the horse, Riley was his stupid name, and bent over to grab the reins and when I stood up, this stupid horse, Riley, stepped on my foot with his front left hoof! It was my right front foot, the only one I had at the time. Anyway I was wearing sneakers that day, not that any other shoe would have made much difference, mind you. Did you ever have a horse step on your foot? Good damn, does it hurt. and what really hurt was the fact I knew that the horse was stepping on my foot on purpose. I looked that horse in the eye and I

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could see the whole plan in his tiny little brain. It is not hard to look a horse in the eye seein' as he was still standin' on my foot and I wasn't moving anywhere fast. Sally didn't know any of this was happenin' because...well, because I was embarrassed and I did not want her to see me almost crying from the pain and...so I finally took a deep breath and said to her through my teeth something about Riley being a bit playful and,...and does he step on peoples very often. Sally said, "no, why?" Well, I did not answer her as you have probably already figured out and I was in a whole lot of pain at this point, to the point of...PAIN. I was pushing Riley's leg, and he is just looking at me grinnin', I tell you grinnin' I tell ya like he was proud of himself. So while I am pushing on his bridle and he is grinnin' Sally says to me, "What's wrong?" and I am trying to form the word 'Nothing' on the tip of my tongue and my foot under thousands of pounds of stupid horse when I get the brilliant idea of punching Riley with all my might in his most venerable spot, or wherever I could reach. Well, I hauled off and hit him with all of my full force of 90 pounds and know that I was going to wipe that stupid grin off his face... I broke my thumb because I had it tucked under my four fingers on my right hand. the sound of the bone cracking scared Riley and he backed up a step and was not standing on my foot anymore. I was relieved he was not crushing my foot... I

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didn't care about my foot anymore...I had a new problem with my hand. Sally said, "What happened?" and moved over to me and said, "Are you alright?", and touched my hand, my right hand, which was now the wrong hand trying to be touching to console me. I had been fantasizing this moment for ever, dreaming about this all week, this was all coming true, my touching moment...I never thought about a broken finger. I screamed and fell to my knees at her touch and she and the horses all jumped back a foot. Sally ran and got her father, and he took me to the doctor. Sally didn't come. She thought it was all my fault and I was scared of the horses, and I should not have hit Riley as he did not mean any harm. Huh. I have not been on a horse since then and keep a fence between me and any horse I come across. I don't miss 'um. When my hand finally healed, and they took the cast off I had become more interested in cars than girls. All of the guys who lived on farms all had something to drive, (trucks, tractors, Junkers), in the fields, and we could do it by ourselves. Anyway, Sally and I never got married in case you were wondering...

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