

Altamont

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After a run in Tower Park I walk our dog down into
the creek bed, down the hill where the slope is gentlest,
by a Sycamore that germinated a century before my mom was born.
Hazy spring heat has left a green slime over the pools of water here
but further down a stream trickles out of the limestone. We follow
the course of the water, my dog and I, like my mom did with her brothers
growing up. Their dog Dee Dee who I never met but whose thick fur
I imagine between my fingers, her smiling pant as she tries to keep up
with the boys. In the coolness between the rocks I look for pottery,
broken vessels from the turn of the century when the park was a fort,
The Altamont Springs across the street drawing visitors to its healing waters.
Later, the World Wars would turn the hotel into a military hospital,
and my great grandpa and my husband's grandpa would be processed
to be shipped overseas in the brick buildings now used for wedding receptions
and youth sports. Decades ago, my mom and uncles found piles of ceramics here,
and arrowheads even older, stashed them in coffee cans and 70s shoeboxes
now lost or dusty in storage. Today I find only a shard of milk glass,
just the rim of a perfume bottle from the old hotel,
its white opacity shimmering against the rock.