

# East Fork: A Journal of the Arts

[Home](#)

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Submit](#)

[Meet the  
Editors](#)

[Issue 23-  
Spring  
2022](#)

[Previous  
Issues](#)

[Join Our  
Team](#)

## Fiction

[Back](#)

[Courtney Sedgwick](#)

[Katie Smith](#)

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## East Fork: A Journal of the Arts

[Home](#)[About Us](#)[Contact Us](#)[Submit](#)[Meet the  
Editors](#)[Issue 23-  
Spring  
2022](#)[Previous  
Issues](#)[Join Our  
Team](#)

### Mom's Favorite Song

[Back](#)

By Courtney Sedgwick

I sat there, stuck, scared, and helpless. My breaths were shorter and I kept getting colder. I could not feel my fingers or my toes; they went numb awhile ago. At this point, the only way I know I am breathing is from the cloud that forms when I exhale. The snow keeps falling and it keeps piling on me. I don't remember what happened. The last thing I remember was my mom's favorite song coming on and singing along. Then came the darkness and cold.

My mom and brother went to Granny's early this morning for Christmas. We always stay a couple weeks and go back home when the "New Year" comes. Since I was not feeling well; Daddy and I stayed behind 'til I felt better. My dad and I spent the whole day together. He made me soup, but it came back up. Dad called Mommy and said we would be there around seven. Mommy already took our bags to Granny's, but I had to make sure I had Ms. Snuggles; Ms. Snuggles was the fluffiest, most cuddliest bear. Ms. Snuggles is light brown with big green eyes, pink ears, and a pink nose.

"Hey, sweetie. How are you feeling?" greeted dad. "Are you ready to leave? We have to go soon."

"I am feeling a little better. Are we leaving now?" I replied. "Don't forget Ms. Snuggles!"

"Okay, I won't forget. Come on, Ms. Snuggles," my dad said as he picked us up. My dad put my shoes on, my coat, then wrapped me and Ms. Snuggles in a small blanket, and started to warm the truck. My dad came back complaining about how cold it was and how the snow was bad, but he wasn't worried because his truck was super awesome. Once the truck was warmed my dad put me and Ms. Snuggles in the back and buckled us in. He got in and started driving.

My daddy had me call mommy on the phone.

"Hey, Sweetie!" mommy says.

"Hi, Mommy!" I tell her.

"How are you feeling, honey? Any better?"

"Not really Mommy."

"Once you get here I will take care of you. I can't wait for you to get here so I can give you a big hug and a kiss. It will be a long drive. Granny lives about two and a half hours away." Mommy says.

"We just left the house and we will be there around seven. I love you, hun. I will see you soon." Daddy told Mommy.

"I love you both so much. Please, drive safely! I will see you both soon." Mommy said.

We got off the phone with Mommy. Dad put on the radio for awhile and kept driving; while I slowly drifted off to sleep. Next thing I knew I wake up and dad is singing to the radio. It was Mom's favorite song. Dad told me I sing like Mommy and that he loves it when we sing. I was feeling a lot better and started singing with Dad.

Then came the really bright lights and a huge thud like a thunderclap. I woke up freezing and I couldn't move; I was stuck under a pile of snow and I was scared. I had been through this before.

When I finally moved my hand, I could see how bad I was bleeding. I was on my way back home from college for Christmas break and I heard Mom's favorite song. I remember singing it all the time with Dad. Then came the lights and the noise. Ms. Snuggles was right next to me and I grabbed her. I wanted to show my family I still had her after all this time.

"Ellie! Ellie! Baby can you hear me! Ellie where are you, sweetie! Oh, God. Please, be okay. Ellie!" screamed my dad.

"Dad," I said faintly. I couldn't move. I was still wrapped in the blanket with Ms. Snuggles. I was stuck in a pile of snow and I was so tired. I saw a flashlight and I tried so hard to move or to say something, anything, but I just couldn't.

This time no one was here for me. The guy that hit me ran from the scene. He didn't even call the police. Why didn't he help me?! He did this!

"Ellie! Thank God! Oh my, I'm so sorry, baby girl." My dad cried as he held me. We sat in the ambulance and they checked to make sure I was okay. They flashed a light in my eye and that was the last thing I remember.

I sat there, stuck, scared, and helpless. My breaths got shorter and I keep getting colder. I could not feel my fingers or my toes; they went numb awhile ago. At this point, the only way I know I am breathing is from the cloud that forms when I exhale. The snow keeps falling and it keeps piling on me. I don't remember what happened. The last thing I remember was my mom's favorite song coming on and we sang along. Then came more darkness and it grew colder.

[Back](#)

## East Fork: A Journal of the Arts

[Home](#)[About Us](#)[Contact Us](#)[Submit](#)[Meet the  
Editors](#)[Issue 23-  
Spring  
2022](#)[Previous  
Issues](#)[Join Our  
Team](#)

### So Alone

[Back](#)

By Katie Smith

They were gone. My daughter singing in the shower loud enough to wake us all up on a Sunday. My son breaking the window with the baseball he got for his birthday the day before tryouts. My wife making breakfast and the smell of pancakes and coffee that filled the house mixed with her sweet perfume dancing in the air. All of them gone to the one accident I couldn't repair in the house. For a moment my life was perfect, and then it wasn't.

I was halfway home from work when I remembered I hadn't picked up the milk my wife had asked for before I left the house, so I turned back to go get it. I remember parking the car and knowing something was wrong, we were expecting to add another to our family in the coming week and my wife was always in her rocking chair by the window waiting for me, but this time there were no needles creating the soft, baby blue blanket for our second baseball player. I ran into the house to my worst fear, an accident my tools couldn't fix.

All three and what could have been four of them were gone, their blood soaked and stained the carpet the darkest shade of wine. They were spread around the house, my daughter in front of the door, my son in the living room next to the piano, my wife underneath the rocking chair we got for our fifth wedding anniversary, and our second baseball player face down in the kitchen sink with the water over flowing onto the tile. I could only imagine their screams, yet mine were loud enough to cut through the thick musk of blood and terror. Whoever this was didn't only take four lives, they took five; they had taken me with them.

My father was the Chief of police at the time when they were investigating the murder and they always came up empty handed, no weapon, no prints, never enough evidence for a case. My anger was like boiling water every time I saw the red and blue light that promised safety; they did nothing for my family and now I don't let them do anything for me. I lost my family thirty-four years ago and I lost my trust in police and anyone that promised to help that same day. They told me they couldn't find anything to bring justice for my, "loss." I couldn't accept there never being an answer, so I kept everything until there was one. The newspaper articles and police reports began to pile so thick on my carpet it covered the stains. I couldn't bring myself to wash it out in fear of needing their DNA back. For the same reason, the shower and the bathroom and the dishes they used that day are frozen in time; never washed and never moved.

Eventually my neighbors noticed how thin I had become when I would leave my house once a day to get the mail and turn back. They meant well and got Meals on Wheels going for me, but you see, it's hard to eat so alone, or even think about going into the kitchen my second baseball player was left in. I wake up some mornings and smell the exact breakfast my wife had made the first morning after our wedding on our honeymoon. Pancakes, potatoes, black coffee with sweet cream, and a slight hint of char from the bacon. Bacon always made her queasy during her pregnancies but she would still wake up early in the morning to make it for me. Sometimes that haunting aroma makes me feel full, like I'm there with her again.

My routine anymore is stagnant, but when I woke up one morning on my way to the front door to get the mail, praying one day I won't see my daughters remains staring back at me, willing her father to save her, I slipped on the baseball left by coffee table in front of the window. I tried to balance myself with my cane, but instead of striking it hard into the floor, it struck my foot. My old, thin skin broke at the blow but I wasn't crying from the pain. I felt like my son had come to me, and in an instant I didn't feel *so alone* anymore.

[Back](#)