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Cut Hay

by Martin Bourne

It's the randomness, the accidental happenstance of a situation unexpected which brings about an event that sits for evermore in the memory buried under all the day to day.

"Stop the car, one of the kids is going to be sick," said my wife during a long late summer journey. A fortunately placed lay-by on the road served for our unscheduled stop. Time to stretch legs whilst soothing noises were made followed by a wipe round with a hankie. I stood by a fence and looked across a field and breathed the heady rush of the smell of cut hay.

"Are you getting back in the car then."

"Just taking a breather."

"I wouldn't have minded one of those. Shame I was cleaning up puke."

I stared across the small valley in front of me all the way back to 1974 and another valley. A small fire, three friends, and Tina Roeberry who had stayed with us after her friend went home. We were giddy and happy drinking cider sat under a tree with the night closing in. Just then it seemed there was no one but ourselves playing truth or dare. What was the question, I don't recall and I think Tina dared herself. How it came about is not important because that night Tina French kissed us boys one after other, with us making sure she wiped her mouth after each boy, and the smell of cut hay laid heavy.

One of the boys had bought a tin of beans with a vague idea of a late night feast but we threw the tin on the fire and legged it laughing our heads off when we heard the tin explode.