



ALETHEA EASON

HOLIDAY COVE

"I'm feeling better," was the first thing my mother said.

"Better from what?"

"I had a little spell."

A long silence.

"And?"

"My heart felt a little strange and everything got black. But I laid down. I'm fine."

"Has this happened before?"

"No . . . only sometimes . . . when I first get up."

She says going to the doctor, "Won't do no good," that she checked out just fine last summer.

There is nothing I can do, but I worried about her all night. I stand at my kitchen sink and look over the lawn the tenants at Holiday Cove share. It is luxuriously soft; I can walk barefoot over it. It extends to a narrow beach, more rock than sand. It has rained off and on for the last month, but the lake is still murky. A crude bridge, some sort of metal contraption on wheels, leans to one side and crosses to a dock shaped like an upside-down L. Karen, my neighbor, is sitting on the bench above where, if any of us had a rowboat, it would be tied.

They took her children away yesterday. She yells at them a lot, unless her aunt's around to run interference, but yesterday the screaming took on a whole different magnitude. I watched her drag Markie by the hair with the baby wailing, purple faced under her arm. She dropped Markie. He landed on his hands and knees in a puddle.

"You fucking goddamned piece of shit," she yelled and kicked him. "I told you to stay out of my stuff."

The baby was practically hanging by his neck by then. I thought he'd choke.