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## Blue

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Enos: Blue

**BLUE**

**CHRISTEN  
ENOS**

One time about fifteen years ago, Greg's son found a dead frog in the woods next to the stream that runs down from the reservoir, through the center of town, and into our neighborhood. Being a boy, he brought the thing home wrapped in his sport sock and showed it to his dad.

Greg considered the frog corpse, displayed on their front step that afternoon, and wondered out loud whether they should cut it open, poke around inside, just to see his kids squirm. He laughed as they ran away—daughter into the house, son down the street—hands covering their ears to block out the images Greg had put into their heads. They were laughing, too.

The frog was eventually unceremoniously deposited at the edge of their yard.

About a year after that, Paul's daughter developed a rash on her lower left leg after a warm fall afternoon playing with the boys at the reservoir.

When Paul caught her scratching, scratching, scratching it while the family watched TV two nights later, he demanded to know what had happened. Had she been doing something dangerous? Had the boys talked her into something?

Paul's daughter swore that she hadn't and they hadn't. They were all just playing by the reservoir.

When Tom got the call late on a Friday night a handful of years later informing him that Paul and another cop had picked up his boy for trespassing, none of us were surprised.

Tom's son and some other kids had cut the chain on a gate to let themselves into the local factory grounds for a night of drinking. Brytaya, the place was called; they made dyes there. The boys went unenthusiastically but willingly when the police showed, leaving their longneck bottles behind in the dark.

Tom had to desert our monthly poker game to go bail his son out, and I went with him. At the station, Tom didn't speak to his son, and we drove home in silence, the kid in the back seat. Tom was never going to punish him. He thought his son only had a fixed amount of love for him, and he didn't want to risk any of it.

Ten years ago the town paper posted a notice urging residents not to eat any fish caught in the reservoir. At that time, I was going out every Saturday morning, casting my first reel before the sun had fully crossed the horizon, escaping the ringing pain of my house where my wife had recently had a miscarriage. Sometimes I brought our daughters along so they could learn that silence could be comforting, too. The fish hadn't tasted quite right for a while, though, so we stopped going.

Greg's son came down with cancer thirteen months ago, and already he's dead at the age of twenty-five. We all get the news standing, on the phone in our kitchens, in our bedrooms, in our dens. We blame ourselves for not noticing the poison we'd brought our families into when we settled near the reservoir.

On one occasion, it snowed blue in our town. Our children, bundled in their winter gear, ran outside, heads back, mouths open.