

You-Know-What
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It was a summer to remember. You know the one. The one with the 4000 mile long Saharan dust storm that was barreling at us from across the Atlantic. It was supposed to arrive by the long weekend. She was the kind of person who wanted to witness the arrival of something like that. It was supposed to create the most intense sunsets. We wake up one morning and she tells me she'd like to see a Saharan dust cloud sunset in person. Where would we go, I say?

Miami, maybe Houston. She was the kind of person, and I know she would never say this out loud, but I knew that she felt it in her heart. I knew that she felt that one day we would all look back on this thing happening to us as a gift, not a punishment. All this time together, she'd say, trailing off over a cup of coffee. The Saharan dust cloud only comes once every hundred years! Cute, I'd say. Sure, she'd say.

We made it as far as Estevan, Saskatchewan. It's about as far south as they'd let you go, because of you-know-what and you could drive further east if you wanted to, but we didn't. Maybe we were tired or maybe we were playing chicken with each other to see how far we could get away from the bubble that was home before we started missing the bubble. There would be no dust cloud sunset for us that year. It made it as far as the Gulf Coast. Houston might have worked. We had to settle for an Estevan sunset. It was pretty good. The air is warm as a hug on summer nights and there was soft serve ice cream. We made a new bubble out of hotel linens and when the inevitable summer storm rolled in I tried and failed to count all the lightning bolts I saw. She slept through the whole thing.

The thing about dust is that it gets into everything. It irritates your nose and throat, and eventually your lungs, making it harder to breathe. The World Health Organization has a report on dust. It's called Dust and it's ninety-six pages long. Not only does dust get into

everything, it *is* everything. Everything makes dust. There is dust from spores or minerals and even volcanic ash, and of course dust storms. You can't escape it.

On the drive home we played a game we sometimes play on trips called More. We would point at something and if we liked it we would say 'more'. We didn't point at things we didn't like and say 'no more', only the things we liked. I don't remember everything we pointed at but it's good to remember that we did point at things. We said more in the nicest way we could. It felt like being decent. It felt like saying Please.