

Kate Feld

## Local girl

Even those, even then, little girl I'd go among accidental groupings of tree and rock, lay down placeness at the conjunction of land features. *These* tree-rooms, this oven stack of rocks, *this* hollow suggesting wall. *This* incident-rich threshold of pond where tadpoles are hatching, *this* section of brook where deposits of clay wait to cloud water, cold handfuls to slap down and shape. The known woods is an elastic mass and if you root in the shade of threat it becomes shelter.

Becoming shelter means mapped with the application of placeness from the department of your interior. Little woman, forest-grown I climbed to the tops of mountains where nothing grew. Impatient with complication by then. I went to certain dirt roads certain south-easterly river valleys cleared for farming. Parked to walk the lines land made into sky where wind wound unhindered. Grassy bold and restful, bare hillfields.

Bare hillfields, no rest. Long since cleared out, committed self to spare years on this island sucking on the bones of a rock picked clean. Homesteader, I plant uneven rows. I work all day in the white field tending my plantation wood of placeness but it does not thrive. *This* ground resists complication. Hedge wall, bullock, hillock, faint swelling. Broadtopped aimless yearning yawn of a hill some glacier made. *This* sky can't hold me or I can't hold it.

Hold it. Well-travelled, consider all that placeness I poured thick and new along brooks and silty ponds, the placeness I've laid down in even at beaches, near the ocean which is difficult for the adhesion of it. The placeness dealt out like

a hand of cards in skiddy little towns all over, and the placeness pressed hard against city sidewalks. The determined placeness planted in foreign parts so they may become home. This homing of the self is a way of creating ease.

Creating ease is no longer easy. All of the placeness I have laid down in my life is stretched, thinning. Supplies are low. I pull some up, deal it out elsewhere. In a place I have known you may see my placeness lift birdlike into the sky or hear the let-go land's sigh. Many places little woman, overextended, has already forgotten. I will save known woods, claybrook, copse-house, dooryard of pond. Save first bright placeness for last. But someday even those, even then.