

CLOSED FOR THE SUMMER

The
Museum of Art will be
closed for renovations from
May 26 – September 13, 2013.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

During summer of 2013, a new lighting system will be installed. Additionally, several other needs will be addressed, turning the facility into a construction site.

The good news: The installation of a LED lighting system will improve the MoA's ability to illuminate exhibitions and provide stewardship to works on exhibition. Additionally, the new system requires significantly less electricity to operate, conserving energy and reducing costs for Bates for many years to come.

The Museum of Art will reopen on September 13 with *Redefining The Multiple: 13 Japanese Printmakers*, a group exhibition featuring artists trained as printmakers who push the boundaries of traditional techniques, and the concept of what a print or multiple is.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support.

As always,

if you have any questions, please contact the
Museum at 207-786-6158
or Museum@bates.edu

Echo Lake



Lurene Legassie was home. For the first time since she left.

She called the store looking for Nat. He answered. She said she was home and that she wanted to see him, that she had something she wanted to tell him. He said he had something he wanted to tell her, too.

She said good and that she'd meet him at nine. So Nat closed up early and went to Echo Lake, which was where they used to go when they had things they wanted to tell each other.

Boy, he was nervous. He hadn't seen her since—well, ten years ago. When she went away. All he knew about her now was that she was in a band in New York. Because no one really talked about her around him. Plus it was 1999, before everybody could know everything about everybody.

He checked his hair in the rearview mirror. He thought he looked good. Especially for 28. A lot of the guys hadn't aged as well. They got fat. Or lost their hair. Or did meth. He hadn't done any of those things.

He got out of the truck. It was a perfect late-July night in Maine. Sixty-seven degrees. Clear. The stars were all out and everywhere.

She finally drove up in a lousy little yellow rental and parked next to the truck.

She looked great. It's hard to outdo a memory, but she outdid his. Wow.

"Hi."

"Hi."

"Really sorry about your mom."

"Thanks."

Mrs. Legassie moved to Bangor the summer after Nat and Lurene finished high school because she'd met a man there who wanted to take care of her. Guess he didn't do a very good job, because she died unexpectedly in January. She wasn't even fifty.

"What happened?"

"Heart."

"Oh. Sorry."

"She was fat, so..."

She was. Which required an oversized casket. Which had to be shipped to Presque Isle, because Mrs. Legassie wanted to be buried in the family plot. She was just getting laid to rest now because you can't get buried in northern Maine until mid-May when the snow is mostly melted and the ground is thawed enough. Unfortunately, a lot of Catholics had died over the winter, so Mrs. Legassie had to wait longer than usual. Till July 22. That's a long wait.

"God, what do they do with you when you die in January and your committal's not till friggin' July? Do they store you somewhere?"

"I don't know, Nat." Why did he ask that? "Can we talk about something else?"

"Yeah. Sorry."

Nat didn't know what else to talk about,

so, he dropped the tailgate and spread out a blanket on the truck bed so they could look at the stars, just like old times. He lay down. She did not. She just sat on the tailgate. Because it was not just like old times. So he sat up, too.

"So...you some rock star now? People say you're in a band?"

"No. Was. But...didn't work out."

She had enrolled at U-Maine the fall after high school. Waitressed her way through the first semester. But being the first person in your family to go to college is hard and next thing she knew, she wasn't going to classes anymore and was just waitressing. And singing in the band that played where she waitressed. They were good. No Kill Shelter. They had a following. A manager got them a gig in Portland. Then in Boston. Then New York. But, like all bands, they broke up.

"So what're you doin' now?"

"Waitress."

"In New York City, huh?"

"Yup."

"Cool. Must be fun livin' in a place where you can do anything you want, whenever you want."

People always think that about New York. But it's not true.

"Well...you can't do anything you want there."



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FICTION

"What do you mean?"

She looked up at the deep, dark, brilliant northern night sky. "Can't do this there."

"What?"

"Sit outside. Look at the stars."

"Why not?"

"Can't see 'em there."

"What do you mean?"

"Never really gets dark there. Light pollution."

"Oh."

"But it gets dark here. God. Look at 'em all." She laughed sardonically.

"What?"

"Just...in New York, everybody's reachin' for 'em. But no one can see 'em. And here...well, you can see 'em. You can actually see what you can go for, and it seems like no one goes for it."

Like him. The summer after high school on a night just like this one she'd asked him to go for it. With her. But he didn't. Because he was too afraid. But he wasn't now because hope makes you brave, so he swooped in to kiss, but he missed her mouth and they



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head-butted a little.

"Ow, Nat! What are you doing?!?"

"Sorry—I'm just...I'm goin' for it, Lurene." He tried to kiss her again and this time his mouth smacked into her chin. "Nat! Stop it." She hopped off the tailgate. "God!"

"I'm sorry—it's just...I never thought I'd see you again, but you're back! And it's nice to have you back."

"Whoa. I'm not back, pal. I'm just here to bury my mother."

"I know—"

"And you don't have me back. 'Cause... I'm pregnant."

"Huh?"

"Yeah. That's what I wanted to tell you."

"Oh."

"Yeah." Then all of a sudden she blurted out, "And I'm keeping it. This time. Because that's what he wants. And I do, too. We're keeping it. And I'm gonna marry him."

Nat couldn't breathe.

"And you're bleeding."

He was. His lip. He hopped up and grabbed some McDonald's napkins from

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the glovebox in the cab. Oh, God. She was pregnant. And it wasn't his. She was getting married. And not to him. The ground was moving and his throat was tightening and his jaw joints felt like he had eaten super sour candy. He was gonna cry. But he didn't.

"You okay? You bleeding?" he asked.

"No." Nat pressed some napkins to his lip. "I'm sorry, Nat. I just wanted you to hear that from me and not somebody else."

"Well...thanks. And...congratulations."

"Thanks. Um...well, I'm gonna get going. Big day tomorrow."

"Wait--don't you wanna know the thing I wanted to tell you?"

"Oh. Yeah. Sorry."

It took him a while to come up with it, but he finally said, "Dad's gonna sell me the store."

Which was true.

"Good. Good for you."

But that wasn't what he wanted to tell her. He wanted to tell her yes, he'd run away with her and get married, which is what he should

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have said back when she asked him. But people said that kids shouldn't have kids. That they both had places to go and things to do and dreams to make real. And she got sent away because she was the one who started looking different. And he just...disappeared on her 'cause he didn't know what else to do 'cause he was so scared and sad.

And now...he didn't have her. And they didn't have a kid. And he'd never gone to college. Or anywhere. And he hadn't done anything but work at Paradis' Last Convenient store. And he didn't really have any dreams to make real.

And he started crying.

"Oh, Nat, come on." Lurene put her hand on his shoulder. Nat fell into her and made her hug him. After a few seconds, she broke away. "Listen-I have to go. I have so much to do tomorrow." She started toward her car.

"Can I go to the service?"

"No. It's just for family and you're not family."

"Well--"

"You coulda been. But you're not."

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FICTION

She opened the door to her car.
 "I love you and I'm sorry, Lurene."
 She stopped. She wanted to say, "You're too late." But she didn't. She wanted to accept his apology. But she wouldn't. She wanted to tell him that she loved him, too, still. But she couldn't. So she just got in her car and drove away. And Nat realized right then and there that he would probably never see her again. He also realized we all pay for what we've done and for what we haven't done and for what we become with the lives we lead.

And his life would be led without her. ■

Playwright and actor John Cariani's most recent play is *Love/Sick* (world premiere at Portland Stage, March 2013). His first, *Almost, Maine*, premiered at Portland Stage and enjoyed an off-Broadway run in New York. He's appeared 26 times on TV's *Law & Order*, and he received a Tony nomination for his work in the 2004 Broadway revival of *Fiddler on the Roof*. He wrote the first draft of "Echo Lake" just before beginning his play *Last Gas*: "One of the first things I do when I begin writing a new play is to write a short story to flesh out the characters and the plot."



COURTESY JOHN CARIANI

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