

May 2015

A Secret I Kept

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Recommended Citation

Hodgins, Jami (2015) "A Secret I Kept," *The Anthology*: Vol. 2015, Article 12.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/anthology/vol2015/iss1/12>

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A Secret I Kept

Jami Hodgins

I used to believe the voices—
The whispered words, the hushed tones,
The ones I'd never seen—
People traded them all the time

But I'd never kept one of my own,
Until dawn overtook dusk and
I was still alone
Glancing over my shoulder in two-second intervals,
Tripping over my feet in broad daylight
It was my predator, and I would
Soon be consumed as its prey

It thrived in the shadows,
So I tried to remain in the light
Until the time came when, once again,
Day was overcome by night
Who told the sun to set?
When was the moon to rise?
Full of darkness, looming as my fate
Its daunting would be my demise

Seconds transitioning into minutes
Half past dusk and a mile to dawn
Wringing my hands and pacing around
So unsettled, I mustn't have been aware
When did my feet sink below the ground?

Immobilized by the earth below
Bound to it, sinking fast beneath the surface
And though I strained to cry out,

For what it's worth—
No one will ever know

The voices are silenced
Now I am with them, and I realize
They don't whisper amongst themselves—
They whisper words unseen to their own eyes
I made the mistake of trusting
What was not before mine—
A curse, I know now

If only I'd known the whispers
Were echoes from below the ground

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Serenity
Will Lattman