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## Cousins

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*Angela Ball*

## Cousins

I drive looking for names of towns. Not to go there, but to see small roads curve in cheerful directions. Many point to cousins I haven't met. One lives in Dundas and is now opening the best present of her life: her grandfather's silk spy map. One stays briefly in Portage. On a long-ago trip to Japan she had been offered a career as a dancing girl. Recently she had tried open-stage dancing at a club and had been motioned off. Her husband's girlfriend, on the other hand, was urged to stay, probably owing to expressive hair. Another drives cross-country pursuing more than one boyfriend. I keep thinking I'll catch sight of her in the therapeutic baths of Glenwood or a glaring truck stop at 2 AM She must be wearing driving gloves and loafers with small suction cups on the soles. In Japan there was an old couple who shared ham and eggs with a pair of black kites, one of whom was probably my cousin, the one whose nightmares got her committed to early and powerful drugs. I roll through an attractive valley, afternoon tinging the stones. The mountains are worn down, mostly talus. Once I was estranged from several cousins at once. We were together in a pawn shop full of onyx and black silver. They wore bulky, nondescript coats. After we left the store and turned a corner, rhinestones fell out. People believe they are hidden in cars, but they are not. They are busts displayed as fake symbols of glamor and accomplishment.