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Sojourn

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Sojourn

When I was nine, my mother and I knit 3,000 miles of American togetherness from southern California to coastal Carolina, knotting sixteen days between freedom and marriage through our national middle. We crawled over red rock canyonland and gawked palm to palm beneath soaring arches through the windows of heaven. It was a season of firsts:

moose and marmots in the Rockies, tallgrass, Eisenhower, and a jumbo stuffed white tiger in Kansas.

She had been to St. Louis, seen the arch. Together we splurged for the tram, gloried in expansion. After meeting Abraham Lincoln in Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky, I dropped into the slipstream of migration for the final descent to my new home.

Looking back across the divide between my formative, fatherless years and these variegated working years,

I see the journey began before our sojourn to Ranchito Alegre, before Grandmommy struck me, before I sold my mother’s push reel mower in a spontaneous yard sale at the end of our driveway. Even before I fisted the bathroom window.

The journey began when my mother stood tall in the face of abandonment, oftentimes prostrate.