

Kelly Watch the Stars

Air

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Everyone dated the demise of our neighborhood from the suicide of the Lisbon girls.
People saw their clairvoyance in the wiped-out elms and harsh sunlight.
Some thought the torture tearing the Lisbon girls pointed to a simple refusal to accept the world as it was handed down to them:
So full of flaws.
But the only thing we are certain of after all these years is the insufficiency of explanations.

"Obviously doctor, you've never been a thirteen year-old girl."

The Lisbon girls were 13, Cecile, 14, Lux, 15, Bonnie, 16, Mary, and 17, Therese.
No one could understand how Mrs. Lisbon and Mr. Lisbon, a math teacher, had produced such beautiful creatures.

From that time one, the Lisbon house began to change.
Almost every day, and even when she wasn't keeping an eye on Cecilia,

Lux would suntan on her towel wearing a swimsuit that caused the knife-sharpener to give her a 15-minute demonstration for free.

The only reliable boy who got to know Lux was Trip Fontaine
For only 18 months before the suicides had emerged from baby fat
To the delight of girls and mothers alike.

But few anticipated it would be so drastic.
The girls were pulled out of school, and Mrs. Lisbon shut the house for maximum security isolation.
The girls' only contact to the outside world was through the catalogs

They ordered that started to fill the Lisbon's mailbox with pictures of high-end fashions and brochures for exotic vacations.
Unable to go anywhere, the girls traveled in their imaginations:
To gold-tipped Siamese temples or past an old man, the leaf broom tidying the (Maw's) carpeted (speck) of Japan.
And Cecelia hadn't died. She was a bride in Calcutta.

Collecting everything we could of theirs, we couldn't get the Lisbon girls out of our minds, but they were slipping away.
The colors of their eyes were fading, along with exact locations of moles and dimples.
From five, they had become four, and they were all (the living and the dead), become shadows.
We would have lost them completely if the girls hadn't contacted us.

Lux was the last to go.
Fleeing from the house, we forgot to stop at the garage.

After the suicide free-for-all, Mr. and Mrs. Lisbon gave up any attempt to lead a normal life. They had Mr. Henry pack up the house, selling what furniture he could at a garage sale. Everyone went just to look. Our parents did not buy used furniture, and they certainly didn't buy furniture tainted by death. We of course took the family photos that were put out with the trash.

Mr. Lisbon put the house on the market, and it was sold to a young couple from Boston.

It didn't matter in the end how old they had been, or that they were girls,
But only that we had loved them, and that they hadn't heard us call;
still did not hear us,
Calling out of those rooms where they went to be alone for all time,
alone in suicide,
Which is deeper than death, and where we will never find the pieces to
put them back together.