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## Three Journals

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# Three Journals

by Scott Thomas

Speaking from what I know of that long-ago era,  
Life moved much too quickly, and people rarely  
Kept accounts of their daily lives. Don't forget.  
This was the time of commuter trains, the time  
Of morning coffee gulped to the sound of a screen  
No one was watching. For the most part, the details  
Of their day-to-day existence are lost to us.  
In the case of my current subject, we have only  
A fragmentary record, and we see him first  
At nine years old only because his mom bought him  
This leatherbound diary for Christmas...*Go ahead.*  
*...I trust you.* On January 1, as you can see,  
He was filled with excitement. Here he scribbles  
About ham, science books, and how he made  
The control panel of a spaceship out of a thing  
Called Lite Brite. Note how each day there is less  
And less detail until, by mid-March, he is reduced  
To entries like, "Dear Diary, Today  
Was a good day," or, conversely, "Dear Diary,  
Today was a bad day." While I am happy that  
The good days outnumbered the bad in 1973,  
Such brevity does little for my research.  
Enough of that.

Next is this tattered, yellow  
Legal pad. It picks up the story nine years  
Later between his freshman and sophomore years  
In college. He was bored at home that summer,

Cutting lawns. One afternoon, surveying the world  
 From a hillside of dandelions, he convinced himself  
 That a girl one hundred miles away, in the shadow  
 Of the farthest mountain range, was in love  
 With him. He was wrong. When the diary trails off  
 That September, he was sitting in his dormitory  
 In the shadow of the farthest mountain range.  
 Though disappointed in love, it seems  
 There were always friends knocking at his thin door...

...Which brings us to his last journal. He was 32,  
 Still without a girlfriend or wife: this diary,  
 Sometimes comical, often sad, documents  
 His desperate attempts at finding love in a cold,  
 Uncaring world. Then, as now, love was an  
 Elusive thing, and the questions he poses will be  
 Familiar to you: *Does love come through persistent  
 Effort like a Boy Scout lighting a campfire  
 With only a piece of flint and a pocketknife,  
 Or does it come, whether you deserve it or not,  
 Like a forest fire borne of a lightning strike?*  
 He has no answers for us. In the final entry,  
 The last time we ever hear from him, he is assessing  
 Yet another prospect. "We'll see tomorrow if she  
 Is the one," he concludes. Then, it is almost as if  
 The next day never came (though we know it did:  
 I checked the database. He lived to be a very  
 Old man.) Interesting, isn't it? What does it mean?  
 Could it be that she was indeed the "one" he spoke of,  
 That now, with the answer revealed to him, with love  
 Putting a final end to his quest, he had neither  
 The time nor inclination to write? Should I  
 Complain? After all, history's loss is his gain.