



BROWSE



## Home Spheres

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**In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:**

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## [Montage with Neon, Bok Choi, Gasoline, Lovers &amp; Strangers]

κ.T. was not in bed. I knew where he was; it had happened often enough. Even during the very early months of our marriage, when we lived in a cramped brick building in Cambridge that had no yard or deck, I once found him sitting on the roof in the middle of a breezy autumn night, gazing up at the stars. Because the roof had no railings or side walls, the sight of him on the rough cement at first frightened me. But as I approached him, I could see how completely at ease he was: he had his knees up and his hands locked on top of them, and his black hair waved in the wind. He took my hand and kissed my cold knuckles. "It was such a clear night that I had to come up and take a look," he said. Above us, a waning half-moon hung in the midst of a vast, dark field studded with celestial lights. Things could not have turned out any other way, it seemed. How could I not have fallen in love with this man—gentle, not quite knowable, slender as a doe? When the chill under our feet crawled up into the soft inner folds of our limbs, we retreated down the stairs. And under our light, plush duvet, we warmed each other, the bristling hair on the backs of our necks, goose-bumped buttocks, hardened nipples, round-tipped toes, pale, pink lips.

Now we have a clapboard colonial by the sea, two boys, two cars, and a cat that never seems to be around. κ.T. had not wanted a house. He said he didn't want the dark corners that came with space: the creaky basement, the sliver under the staircase, the unfinished attic with yellow, spongy heat filters and crumpled ventilation pipes running along the walls like spilled guts. So he has since become a home-improvement expert, as American as cowboys or astronauts. "There are almost none of them in Korea," he likes to say, "not to mention housekeeping husbands."

He soon filled in the shadowy spots in our home with white sanded shingles and cabinets with ornamental knobs. I guess we owe part of the success of our book-design business to his carpentry skills: without our airy and awesome home office, we might not have found working side by side as pleasurable as we have. Throughout our marriage, we have rarely been apart for more than a day.

The following day, κ.T. would be going back to Seoul. For the first time in seventeen years. Only for a week or so—maybe two. The old house he once lived in was going to be torn down.

Here on Marblehead Neck, we live in an insular, well-groomed neighborhood built on a promontory, connected to the Massachusetts shoreline by a narrow, mile-long causeway. But too many nights, my husband sat out on the back porch, at the edge of this huge continent, the tip of this terrestrial world, and let his eyes wander the night sky.

From our bedroom window, I could not see him, but I knew where his eyes were gazing. The night was hazy, the thin crescent moon striped with gray clouds. I spotted twinkles toward the south that I hoped were the constellation Leo, the harbinger of **[End Page 215]** spring, but they kept moving across the sky, eventually turning into blinking blue, red, and white lights. A plane, departing this land, embarking into the night, swift as a feathered dart. But I felt the pull of the earth's gravity on my body, heavy from the weight that I've put on through two births, from the load of κ.T.'s unshared memories.

κ.T. stood in the check-in line at Logan, his ears attacked by unfamiliar chattering voices. All this Korean conversation baffled him, and he felt as if he should respond even though no one was talking to...



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