

CAROLINE BOCK

## **A Life of Close Critique**

The youngest in your critique group reminds you that you were the first to talk about sex in our writings. *Sex*. You've had some, and loved three, though one never involved anything more physical than a kiss in the Village, on the corner of 11th and 6th, the fog gathering at two in the morning, a warm, encasing September drizzle mixed with the stink of black-bagged restaurant garbage and the taste of good scotch and Camels on his tongue, one of those kisses that you replay since he's dead, of an asthma-induced heart attack, only weeks after that kiss, after you wouldn't take his call at work, after the fog found its home off island. The youngest is confessing she can't write anymore; she lacks an end. You urge her to write toward love. You always meant to be the first to talk about love.