

## The Farm

1

The farmhouse's foundation is the next in line to be restored. The inside has been gutted already, the chalky plaster was ripped down, releasing drifting fronts of white dust and revealing once again the crooked, imperfect logs that brace the ceiling. The wood is dark and rough, with jagged, splintered edges, and most definitely cut long ago from the bluffs that surround the farm. The remains of the cracked walls were tossed in handfuls and shovelfuls through the open window, landing in a pile and producing another wave of white that billows outward and then is whipped away by the wind toward the pond where one solitary trout lives.

2

O.D. will stand shakily whenever the door is opened, unsteady on the weak, short legs that keep her fat torso off the ground. She hobbles toward you, her body jerking as if she had only three legs. She was found on the side of the road, seen dumped from a car in the distance. The vet said her body showed several litters, besides the bumps under her fur, like little hills, that were cancer. *It won't be long.* O.D. stands simply for Old Dog.

3

He is making a waterfall by placing rocks in the stream. "Planting them," he calls it. "A difficult process." He has one real leg and not the strength he had had in a time when muscles did not ache in the morning, when getting up wasn't something to be contemplated. "If they are not planted carefully, they will just fall away." Someone had said he lost the leg after being run over by a train. I have never asked him to tell me the story, although I know the most minute mechanics of his prosthesis, and as I bend to lift the rock with him now, I can't imagine the pain, only scarcely the train at a hundred and ten and two wet black rails.

*Kurt Clopton*