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## Photo of Our Parents, Circa 1992

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**Photo of Our Parents, Circa 1992**  
**by Nikki Ummel**

*They were unhappy,*  
my sister says,  
our bare feet on cold tile  
as we squint at the photo  
of our parents.  
She tilts it  
as if that angle  
might improve  
what we know.

At the stove,  
flipping pancakes,  
I nod. I know this photo.  
How their arms wrap  
around shoulders,  
no child in sight,  
how my mother's braid  
tickles my father's  
left elbow as they lean in  
to fill the frame.

*It makes sense,*  
says my brother  
from the corner chair,  
assuming his classic  
coffee cup pose.

*After a few years,*  
*they felt trapped.*  
*What they wanted*  
*was not each other.*

We stare at the photo,  
absorb the shock of our parents  
in matching Jimmy Buffet t-shirts,  
tube socks draping their noses  
and dangling from their ears,  
casting shadows over their crooked smiles.  
No child in sight.  
No child in sight.