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## Whatever You're Not Out Of

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## WHATEVER YOU'RE NOT OUT OF

Scott Provence

I try to tell the waitress about my shitty childhood. I have to make it short because there's only so much room on her pad. "I'll have the hard-beaten eggs and the bruised-berry awfuls," I say. She nods, writing without looking up. She's about as old as I am, and probably can't decide if she wants to hear, "You look young for your age" or "You look older." "You look medium-well," I say when my food comes. She's confused. I should have ordered a burger.

The next morning I'm shadow-boxing in the shower, imagining my father's head whipping back like a drain-plug, when I slip on a right hook and separate my shoulder on the edge of the tub. When the waitress asks about the sling, I tell her it was the result of a fight. I tell her about the other guy and how he begged for mercy like it was something I could give. When she brings me my food, I notice there's a hair on the edge of my plate. She's giving herself over in the smallest of portions. I eat the hair with the meal, hoping it's hers, hoping she'll notice. But she's too busy entertaining the next table over: a group of college kids who kick each other under the seat and want one of everything on the menu.