

perihelion

In the wake of Papa Griff's passing, Sol was deeply affected but chose not to show her emotions outwardly. As she expressed her hatred for the lake that had claimed two of her uncles and now Griff, it became her unyielding enemy. This sentiment resonated with Girard, who mourned silently, while Evelyn occupied herself in the kitchen. An hour later, the group ventured into the northern forest with a picnic basket, arriving at a serene clearing surrounded by fragrant cedars. Here, they discovered stone markers resembling obelisks, unadorned with names, which represented the lost relatives of the community. Evelyn revealed that this land was a burial site established by a deceased local landowner who wished for her husband's unclaimed body to be buried there as well.

They decided to picnic in the shade, despite Sol declaring her ongoing aversion to the lake. The narrator had other plans, feeling compelled to sail to the Slate Islands during the perihelion when the Tashi comet would be visible. Though Jolie was hosting a local festival with music and festivities, he sought the adventure of the sea, believing such a journey would lead to meaningful encounters.

Equipped with supplies from Evelyn and Girard's library, he arrived at the Slate Islands, greeted by wildlife that reminded him of cherished memories. That first night was overcast, eclipsing the comet, and instead of reading or making music, he simply enjoyed the ambiance of the night.

The following day, he explored the beach, noting wildlife tracks but found the island deserted as a storm rolled in, bringing heavy rainfall and solitude. As he resigned himself to a quiet evening inside, consuming a simple stew accompanied by the last jar of preserves, he found himself drifting into a restful slumber. In this state, he experienced a dreamlike vision of his friends a decade into the future, which awakened a mix of nostalgia and hope.

By dawn, the rain ceased, prompting him to return homeward. Approaching Jolie, he learned of changes in the community through the music of a new bassist named Rachel, whose talent stirred a sense of melancholy and wonder. He was captivated by her unique sound, which promised vibrancy and a newfound energy that contrasted with his own simpler approach to music. As the comet reappeared overhead, he navigated his way toward a lively scene in Jolie, reflecting on the beauty he often failed to recognize.