

Ojo Caliente

Katie Manning

Out the window, the desert mountains and Chama River look like a painting of themselves, too majestic to be real. The three of us cruise beside them in an SUV, singing along to *The Joshua Tree* and talking about our kids. Our bodies have been marked by those children like the landscape has been marked by moving water. We reach the resort, pay a fee, and gain access to the sacred springs. Before I enter the water, I read every sign—arsenic, lithia, soda, and iron—each supposed to help in some way with arthritis, indigestion, or fatigue. I wonder who first touched these waters, long before informative signs and mineral knowledge. Who first decided it was worth the risk to submerge a bit of skin into the heat and hope for healing? I lower myself into a pool and think of the man whose friends lowered him through a roof to be healed. I wish for a sign that says this water can wash away the grief and fear that have come with a year marked by colliding cars and cancer cells, but I know this can't be. I lie back and float on the water, arms wide. The clouds are dark as distant mountains. To them, my body must appear to be a small star in a clear sky.

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T H E J O S H U A T R E E U 2



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“Where the Streets
Have No Name”

The Joshua Tree

03/1987

Island