

What happened to Mersault?

Maggie Jefferis

(Based on “The Stranger” by Albert Camus)

Father left today. He did not say why. Maybe It was something Maman said. Or something I said, I do not know. He left no note. If I were leaving, I would leave a note. It would say “Maman, I have had quite enough. I am leaving. Goodbye.” It was cold this morning. Cold enough my nose was running. Tomorrow the kids at school will ask where Father has gone. I cannot tell them where. I do not know where. Maman and I were never close. Maman tells me we are the decisions we make. They always disagreed on that. Father believed in destiny.

It was cold this morning. Cold enough my nose was running.

I slipped out the front door. It is cold now. Not cold enough. I cannot see my breath. I kick the rocks that lie in my path. The rock hurts my toe. The rocks are cold. They make my toe feel hot. I walk a half mile. I wonder if Maman wonders

where I am. If she cares where I am.

I am lost. I passed the tree on the edge of where Father allowed me to go. Father is gone. He no longer dictates where I am to go. He cannot stop me from walking where I please. It is cold. Colder here than at the house. I can see my breath now. The sun has begun to set. I walk another half mile and stop.

I look up. I found father. His face is purple. It is twisted. Father was hanging from a tree. There is a rough rope around his neck. It looks like it hurts. There is a rough around where the rope hangs. I shout his name “Father! Father!”. He does not respond. I shout again. “Father! Father!” No response still.

I try to get him down from the tree. I hit the rope with a sharp rock from the ground. His body falls. It is cold. Father is cold. His face is purple. I call to him. “Father!” No response. He is cold. Colder than I am. His face is purple and twisted. I shake him. He is not breathing. I shake him. He is cold. I shake him. Father is dead. Tomorrow the kids at school will ask where Father has gone. Father has gone away. Father is dead.