



## *Abandon*

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alone from the age of three  
always as your Grandmother had often said  
“the odd man out”  
you were the youngest of three  
all alone in the company of an alcoholic caretaker  
your father had been a drunk  
that is why your mother left him  
only to return to the intolerable tyranny of a terrible home life  
she had once escaped into marriage by the age of 15

my earliest memories beyond that first cold night  
that we came to live with my grandparents  
apart from this dark silhouette completely blocking the light in the doorway  
I would never know my father  
I never knew the beatings I was too young to remember  
and now abandoned to the unspeakable devices of the very life  
my mother had hoped to escape  
all those years before  
no, my first memories  
other than of long days alone down by the old long shed  
were of waiting all day for the school bus to return home  
to bring back my brother and sister  
only to be abandoned once more  
locked out of the house until my mother came home  
who might allow me into the house  
no, my most vivid memory  
is of running after the car barefoot on a rough paved road  
screaming to the top of my lungs, “don’t leave me, don’t leave me”  
once more they were gone

*Cleveland L. McLemore is an artist who moved to the Triangle area in 1995 and now lives in Hillsborough. Some of his writing can be seen online at [www.writtenmind.com](http://www.writtenmind.com).*

