

## Miscellaneous

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Every Monday, she wrote the list of spelling words, looping white cursive on the board as we spilled into the room, scrawling powdery white chalk across a sea of green as we copied them down cockeyed and tilting on ruled lines. By then, the Word of the Week—the extra credit word that made my grandma whistle and say, “That’s a doozie,” the five-dollar word that Miss Tighe posted the definition beneath to unlock its full power—was already pinned to the yellow paper-covered corkboard.

This is the room where I must have learned words like pedantic, ostentatious, or connotative. Miscellaneous. That’s the one I remember. The way it rolled off the tongue, each syllable dancing to the next. Miscellaneous. A word to describe the random, the indescribable which now could be named, to cover an entire category which had never been open to me before. Even though it was the longest word our fifth-grade class had come across, studying how each letter came together, memorizing how each sound kissed the next was easy. It tugged at me. It curled up in my lap, a nuzzling kitten that purred its syllables, single notes in a melodic song, and it hummed, a stir fry that sizzled on the stove, a harp that plucked a chorus of notes together in one miscellaneous jumble, a jumble that opened my childish eyes. A jumble that scared me because I wasn’t ready to grow up.

Lately, my days feel miscellaneous. Before the coronavirus shooed us all into quarantine, there was always wake up, go to work, come home, make dinner, go to bed. Now, there’s wake up, work at home, head to the kitchen to make tea, notice the dishes are still in the sink from the night before, unload the dishwasher, fill it back up, pour hot water through herbal tea leaves that smell like someone squeezed an orange into my mug, sit and work, resist looking at social media, more tea, work, give in and check Instagram, spread Nutella on toast for lunch, notice the laundry needs folding, answer the door for a package, get back to work, call and reschedule an upcoming wedding-related appointment, work, work, realize it’s after seven, make dinner,

watch TV, sleep. I think about how we're lucky, my fiancé and I, we're lucky to have jobs we can do from home, we're lucky to be healthy, we're lucky to have this time together before we get married—if we can get married this summer. I feel at ease. I feel stressed. I feel something I can't quite name. As the weeks at home drag on into the double digits, I think about Miss Tighe and how she knew the world wouldn't always be a place you could categorize, a place where every thought, every feeling, every experience had a name. Sometimes, things are just miscellaneous.