

I am twelve. My mother and I have locked my father out of our house. My mother emits red light from her hands, directed at me. She commands me to keep looking at the light as proof that I am not betraying her. I am paralyzed by the light. I keep trying to look away so I can move, but my mother's pull is too strong. Suddenly, the red light dims, and I force myself to follow with my ears a noise at our back door. My eyes catch up, and I see my father outside the door banging his head against it. He has the head of a ram, not a man, and will beat it on the door until he can get in, take me apart until I die, and eliminate my mother. I woke from what was another terrifying nightmare during my preteen years.

From *The Overlife: A Tale of Schizophrenia* by Diana Dirkby