

Another Country

All things considered, going to Europe wasn't her worst idea, leaving the girls with their father and stepmother, saying she needed to clear her head, get back to painting. Everyone would agree it was time she got sober and there was that place in Rome where she could dry out, an old monastery—the Innocents—she'd have plenty of privacy, and after all, newborn babies are abandoned every day so it wouldn't be out of the question to find one on the Spanish Steps, a boy wrapped in blankets. She'd bring him home in the spring. *Girls, meet your brother, Antonio*, she'd say, naming him for St. Anthony, patron saint of lost things, of which there were so many in the world—especially her. She couldn't marry the guitar teacher just because he was the father. He was a musician, too young, and moody. She'd mistaken his instability for artistic genius. Anyway, she was forty-one and didn't want to embarrass the girls. Whose mom got pregnant at this age? It would never work. There was no need for everyone to know her secrets. In Europe, she could board a train in one country and wake up in another, never have to tell the handsome musician what they'd set in motion that afternoon—one body reaching blindly for another.