

Tell me tell me tell me

by [Brian Doyle](#) in the [September 16, 2015](#) issue

I board the airplane to see my parents. They live far away and long ago  
And some years into the future; you never met such wry time machines  
In your life. Sometimes they will be about to pass the marmalade when  
Suddenly it is late 1941 and they are in college and kissing on the train;  
But then as you slather your toast it is 1967 and a war wants to eat their  
Son or 2012 and they are at that son's wake or 1929 and a father comes  
Home without his job, or it is a week ago, and do you think that Federer  
Is the finest tennis player ever, or Laver, or Don Budge? It happens that  
Fast. It's unnerving and glorious and confusing and perfect and I would  
Sit with them every afternoon, if I could, and say tell me tell me tell me,  
Tell me every moment of your whole lives, don't leave me here without  
Your grace and humor and the extraordinary gleaming jar of marmalade  
From which come all your stories. *Next year in Ireland* . . . says my mother,  
And my dad grins, and I want to kneel and beg the Lord for this moment  
Again and again always, the inarguable yes of their bodies, the resonance  
Of their endurance, the hunch and hollow of their shoulders, the reverent  
Geography of their faces, the lean song of my father's hands on the table.