

Kid & a Kingsnake

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My wife's ophidiophobic. She flinches
 at photos of reptiles. Our son wants
 a pet snake. He lifted a dead kingsnake
 we discovered in the backyard and smiled.
 Venomous snakes are still venomous
 after they're dead. There's none of these creatures
 up north, in Connecticut, where my wife's family's from.
 There's no orange iguanas, armadillos or wild boar
 in the bushes behind the parking lots. Here,
 in Florida, where it's hot as hell in October,
 where the lap dance was invented, bars close
 at 4 am and you can purchase cans of rum and coke
 at turnpike rest stops. There's nostalgia
 for the cold that keeps folks inside, out of range
 of others, for half the year. We're driven south
 when an Iron & Wine and Ben Bridwell cover
 of David Gilmour's no longer freed us from the weight
 of heaven poured like cement on a thick foundation
 winter clouds. Our life on the lake ended
 when Fish & Wildlife dragged
 a six-foot gator across our lawn to their truck.

Her northern sensibilities were done
doing that. There's no convincing her
snakes are everywhere. Some eat
poisonous frogs that tease and tempt our dog
on the driveway. Even thoughts of snow angels melt
this close to the equator. Still,
better the rain in LaBelle than snow in Hamden.