

## ROSAMUND

by Garret Evans

Standing in a shallow flash of water taking in duck decoys with one of the springer spaniels, here in this happy hunting and fishing ground of the Harrismith area, standing there dreaming, I drifted once again into the immoderate past.

The Africans are quite right to think of the advancing age as a receding past, eventually to the ancestors and all.

So in my fanciful thoughts, once again I was buzzing along the narrow Devon lanes in a little yellow Morgan sports job. I was going to collect a young lady named Rosamund I'd known in Spain. Finding her, we stayed with two of her friends in a pretty village with a good stream and lots of fat little West Country trout.

She'd cut her hair shorter but otherwise was unchanged. I'd always associated her with the sun and the sea, the isles off the Spanish coast and cicadas whirring in the summer air. It was marvellous to see her again. She looked like a million bucks. But then young men with their impossible ambitions and brittle egos are often selfish and stupid.

I last saw her briefly in London a few years later. We had a quick chat and I laughed and she asked why I laughed.

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But now here, a front was coming down along the mountains and the light was fading. It would be cold tonight. And standing there in waders, was only a plumpish man in late middle age with wistful and ridiculous memories:

You asked why I laughed  
Perhaps because I did there  
In the white shuttered place on the hill  
With cicadas whirring in the summer air.

Now the days grow short.  
Here there are only black branches  
Against a red sky.