

After the fundraiser the other night, Marianne told him this thing about her family. He didn't know what to say. He started telling her that he loved her. It just happened, like drawing your hand back when you touch something hot. She was crying and everything, and he just said it without thinking. Was it true? He didn't know enough to know that. At first he thought it must have been true, since he said it, and why would he lie? But then he remembered he does lie sometimes, without planning to or

knowing why. It wasn't the first time he'd had the urge to tell Marianne that he loved her, whether or not it was true, but it was the first time he'd given in and said it. He noticed how long it took her to say anything in response, and how her pause had bothered him, as if she might not say it back, and when she did say it he felt better, but maybe that meant nothing. Connell wished he knew how other people conducted their private lives, so that he could copy from example.