

## IF YOU BELIEVE IT ●

Brendan Todt

We're fine. We are. We're here. There are trees and grass and people, all living. Someone comes along and takes all of the dead ones away. Grass clippings in the garbage cans or yard waste bags. Bodies in the ambulance first, and later the hearse, and thank goodness for all of us they don't bury them anywhere nearby. The trees die, too, but want to stay put. Or they die, but only in part, and fail not only in their lives but in their deaths. Sometimes someone has to cut down a tree, and we can all understand that. One of the new neighbors didn't have to but cut them down anyway and after two years left the house when he left his wife. Nobody I've spoken to misses him any more than they miss his trees. It has nothing to do with the tire swings, though those were nice. Or the shade or the fresh air. Maybe, if I was told I had to explain it, I'd say it was the color of the leaves in fall, but there are many more trees with many more colors more beautiful than those. In the end, it's like all things a matter of preference: belief and disbelief. Carl, before he left, said he was convinced all the trees were dead already. And remains convinced to this day. That may be the only difference between a man and a tree; a man will believe far more than what can be believed.