

# An existential-aware `DeriveFoldable`

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# The current situation (GHC 7.10.2)


```
data Plain a = Plain Int a [a]
  deriving (Functor, Foldable, Traversable) ✓
```

```
data Expr a where
  EInt  :: Int -> Expr Int
  EAdd  :: Expr Int -> Expr Int -> Expr Int
  EBool :: Bool -> Expr Bool
  EIf   :: Expr Bool
         -> Expr a
         -> Expr a
         -> Expr a
```


```
deriving instance Functor      Expr ✗
deriving instance Foldable     Expr ✗
deriving instance Traversable  Expr ✗
```

# Why can't we derive Foldable?

```
class Functor f where
  fmap :: (a -> b) -> f a -> f b
```

```
instance Functor Expr where
  fmap f (EInt i) = EInt (f a) -- Can't conclude
                                -- EInt b ~ EInt Int! 
```

```
class Foldable t where
  foldMap :: Monoid m => (a -> m) -> t a -> m
  foldr   :: (a -> b -> b) -> b -> t a -> b
  ...
```

```
instance Foldable Expr where
  foldMap f (EInt i) = f i -- This typechecks. Hm... 
```

# Actually, we can!

```
data Expr a where
  EInt  :: Int -> Expr Int
  EAdd  :: Expr Int -> Expr Int -> Expr Int
  EBool :: Bool -> Expr Bool
  EIf   :: Expr Bool -> Expr a -> Expr a -> Expr a

instance Foldable Expr where
  foldMap f (EInt i)      = f i
  foldMap f (EAdd e1 e2) = foldMap f e1 <> foldMap f e2
  foldMap f (EBool b)    = f b
  foldMap f (EIf c t f') = foldMap f c <> foldMap f t <> foldMap f f'
```

## But...

```
data G a where
  G1 :: Int -> G Int
  G2 :: a ~ Int => Int -> G a
  G3 :: b ~ Int => b -> G Int
  G4 :: a ~ Int => a -> G a
```

# Compromise

- We only fold over a constructor argument if it *syntactically* mentions the last type parameter.

```
data G a where
  G1 ::          Int -> G Int
  G2 :: a ~ Int => Int -> G a
  G3 :: b ~ Int => b   -> G Int
  G4 :: a ~ Int => a   -> G a

instance Foldable G where
  foldMap _ G1{} = mempty
  foldMap _ G2{} = mempty
  foldMap _ G3{} = mempty
  foldMap f (G4 i) = f i
```

- Slated to land in GHC 7.12 (8.0?)

<https://ghc.haskell.org/trac/ghc/ticket/10447>