

FROM THE DISAFFECTED POETRY SUITE

**COULD SHE BUT CARE LESS**

Under cover of a starless night  
she risks taking it down,  
remembers to be careful.  
Last time, she had been hasty,  
and pieces of her life  
escaped the pages and were  
gone in a beat.

She spreads her hand loosely  
over the photos,  
raises her eyes to peer at them;  
feels her heartbeat quicken  
at the eyes that meet hers.

She knows intellectually, the  
eyes in the baby's face aren't  
really looking into hers,  
but her heart aches so, she  
can't convince it otherwise.

Afraid to turn the page, she  
sits unmoving,  
stroking the photo,  
remembering the last time  
she'd seen the babe—  
how knowing,  
his solemn expression.

She ponders if  
she'll see him again,  
feels worries gathering like  
a flock of ravens,  
wonders if closing the  
book will feel as careless  
as opening it did.

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### **THE MAIN DIFFICULTY WITH THAT IS...**

Winter has ripped into the region with its usual panache;  
all blustery arctic wind-chill and sideways snow stabbing  
skin like needles

Autumn, that season of impressionistic colours, dancing  
leaves, filled with Indian Summer warmth - those were the  
days she loved the most

But this year, this time - summer and winter colluded to  
do in autumn, to squish that season thinly as if it had  
never existed

She kept going over it in her mind, wondering why it was  
so troublesome, why she couldn't get by it

Sure, autumn was the time of year she loved best, but it  
was only one year, yes?

But what a year - when autumn was swallowed, it took  
with it, a chunk of her family...a huge chunk

And that's what she couldn't get over...it was as if when  
the leaves fell all at once and blew away  
in double-quick time, so did her family, like death

Oh the trouble with that, the big difficulty, she knew, was  
that they weren't dead, just not in her life now

That was still not believable and her grief knew no bounds

How was she supposed to mourn them when they weren't dead

Sometimes, although she never thought it out loud, she toyed with  
the idea that it would have been better if...

But no, she stopped short of thinking that, not wanting to make  
it so

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### CHANGING THE CLOCKS

Imagine the last four months are erased completely  
Imagine that I don't need to know what happened  
Imagine I look outside and the boys are  
tumbling out of your van  
They are as blond and tousled as ever, giggling their  
way up my walk, calling to me as they come  
Imagine my eyes widening in happy surprise  
Imagine these extra crowsfeet, the ones old skin  
acquires from crying too often, just disappear  
Imagine the leaves of Fall flying backwards to  
stick themselves to each bare bough  
Imagine the hour we gained last night is lost for  
now as I wind all the clocks to summer again  
Imagine the hole in my heart healing over as if  
it had never existed  
Imagine you are the daughter I remember, not  
the stranger you've become  
Imagine...  
If I close my eyes and spin three times,  
...we'll all be together again

**MOM, ARE YOU THERE? IT'S ME...**

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Surprisingly, I find myself missing you these days  
Me, who was almost relieved when you died  
Although, bearing a back-pack filled with blood  
and carrying a cup of your tears  
I distracted myself for almost two years  
Not wanting to put either down, nor spill a drop  
on the ground

But, taking a stroll by the lake last night, noting  
the ice skinning the surface  
An overwhelming feeling of loss lay over me  
as geese veed above, headed south  
Another winter's settling in and you're not here  
but that's not all of it  
Your grand-daughter's gone also, and with her,  
the boys are gone too

Oh—you probably know, from where-ever you  
watch—and I know that you do  
They're not where you are, they still breathe  
Do you know that she just doesn't want us in  
their lives any more  
It's going on three months since we've been  
in touch, and yes, I'm dying a bit more  
every day

Walking along the shore last night, I wanted  
so much to talk to you  
Realizing as I did, that what I really wanted was  
for you to still be here  
If you were, I'm quite sure, our girl would never  
have done this thing that's she's doing  
I don't think she could have been this cruel if  
she knew you would know

I scanned the skies, emptied of geese, searching  
for some sign of you, I think  
Something to give me a hint, some suggestion -  
some something to tell me  
what I could do, what I should do, that might  
make a difference, might get through  
to my girl - help her see what she's doing,  
what's happening to all of our lives  
the longer this impasse goes on

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Mom , I know that we didn't always see eye to eye—  
an understatement to say the least  
And this probably feels like I only want you because  
I need something  
But when did that ever happen?  
Did I ever need anything from you?  
Not that I'd admit, I don't think...  
I learned to dislike you so much...alright, it was  
close to hate by the end  
Maybe this is the one good thing that will come  
out of the estrangement...  
I will find a way back to you.

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### THE SMELL OF OVER...

I came close to crumbling earlier this week  
Near the edge of that place, the one I know  
Better than to approach usually, or especially, casually  
But learning of a late night visitation by gendarmes  
Ready, or so it seemed, to condemn me  
For my inky ramblings - I felt ready to capitulate,  
if for but a single moment

Until, rising swiftly through the mists of malaise  
that had accompanied me across an ocean and  
a country, continent-wide  
I was able to generate some common-sense  
Shake off both ill feelings and a general ennui  
that crouched ready to seize me should I  
become any less vigilant

End the paranoia shrouding me - begin to list  
the reasons not to give into  
whatever these latest accusations were about  
By the time I met the authorities, I was able  
to channel my truest self - writer, advocate and  
most importantly...

mother who sadly has only one concern; my child  
who has gone somewhere I don't recognize for  
reasons I cannot fathom...  
There seems no end to the betrayal that she needs  
to ladle out, hoping to render me gone  
Not sure what that's about...I am, after all, gone...

But it's not her fault; she feels threatened, frightened  
somehow... it's the death of our relationship, I know it  
These latest acts have proven we are done,  
more grieving but even that is nearing an end;  
...the smell of over, is heartbreak.