

A Collection of Poems

121 Bolinas Avenue • Missing Myself • Caper • Swing Set

121 Bolinas Avenue

It was always a second home

My summer vacations

spent idyll amongst the roses, scurrying around the tennis court, or through the arc of the sprinklers.

My emotional retreat

Hidden under piano forts, bundled in the TV room with hot, sugared oatmeal, cozied next to my Peruvian grandmother.

Where I'd flock for a second holiday morning

Running as fast as my feet could take me down a driveway I loved, even though it always felt too long.

The hungered sound of the expectant gate, hinging open, notes of my childhood anthem.

It was my second home.

Home to my second family.

Who welcomed me as their own.

Gave me a foundation to grow on, a home to grow in, and a family ideal to grow towards.

When my own life shifted

My own family's cracks emerged

It was the place I could go to and find solace, warmth, joy and most of all hope.

I always had my second home.

I always had them,

my second family.

But we didn't see the vines that had begun to form.

Growing in the shadows,

Thriving in the dampness of jealousy, anger and contempt

We laughed off the rivalry, and let the vines creep in, cracking at the impenetrable foundation.

The lovingly weathered piano continued to play,

The candles - too large for any birthday cake - remained lit,

The eclectic yet iconic Christmas ornaments somehow stayed hung,

And the house captured new seasons of memories, a new generation growing, the same traditions weaving us together.

But some feelings only hardened

Fertilizing the weeds
Feeding the vines

He couldn't catch them or pull them out like he use to
His devotion to the garden slowed, just like his gait.
She focused on her roses, expanding grass over the concrete, ways to see only the beauty life
had to offer.

The weeds finding their way through, no one to tug at their indecency, no one to remind them
that they had no place there in such a beautiful and loving home.
This was not their home to take root.

It was meant to be a fortress
Yet my second home,
My escape,
My ideal of what an unbreakable family could mean, look like, and feel like -
Began to crack.

With the gardeners gone,
too much ill will had be left untended judgments and assumptions grown rampant
Consuming the home
Forbidding any light of truth or love to find its way in.

It was my second home.
It had held my second family inside
But I never realized I always assumed it was what had held the family together.

All this time,
it was the constant gardeners
who had been binding us to one another, keeping the home a home.

Missing Myself

"Miss".

So much in a word that
hasn't been said.

Miss you. But not really.
because you haven't had to surrender
To forge your independence - forged on another.

Miss

She is unhinged.
Not yet linked to another, miss-tified in her own
being.
Rudderless bliss, bare foot, bare breasted, barely aware.

Ms.

She is closer to age,
but further from her gleeful ignorance.
Ms-taken for a hopeful damsel

Mrs.

She welcomes her new figure,
Identity,
Morphed into
a n o t h e r.
Morphing into shape. A new soul that grows
In her.
but externally grows from His branches.

Mrs.

Her name.
Her identity.
Her roots.
Upheaval and left out to dry -
- Maybe useful to keep as
Memorabilia.

For He.

He always claimed it.

"Mr"

Youth created no barrier.

He

Always was his *own* man.

He

Could not be commoditized, branded, handed off.
He.
gave her her "s". "s"-ecurity

She, his "Mrs"

The soul "s" she claims.
And she does so with dignity and grace
Even though she

Ms,

Miss,

Mrs

Simpler, unobscured days.

Excuse me, Miss?

Caper

You always did scoop them out
by the forkful
Full of anticipation
a welcomed sour tinge within your tired mouth

Caper.

The irony of the word
Playful,
Lively,
yet neither quite capturing you.

All you craved was the quick harshness
of your tongue
sour words tasting justified
Masking the blandness of your self-pity
You are the one who has survived,
You are the one who conquered the
nastiest of bites,
you are the one.

The one who pushed us out.
Caper, skipping away.
Yet we are the ones worn from your escapade.

Because I watched you -
Opening the jar
Eyes widened, worn fork

s u s p e n d e d

It was You.
You dug in and relished the self-flagellation
soured
When you could have searched for something sweeter.

Swing Set

Why do you swing alone little girl?
Why do you swing so high in your tiny
black suede shoes?
Why do you swing with tears on your dress?
Tell me you belong to who?

I swing so I might feel the world swaying past me
I swing, so I might see my feet against
the constant still sky
I swing, to feel the wind brush against me
for the chance to lose the fear to fly
I swing for the prospect to glimpse at tomorrow
to have something continual in my life,

I swing so I might forget what has happened
so I might forget not to cry
I swing so my worries and sadness can't catch me
I swing to get closer to mommy and daddy
so I don't remember I was not there to say goodbye.
I swing so I know they are watching me living- watching me
try.

I swing because my best memories lie in this park so familiar
I swing because I can't figure out why
I swing to numb the pain I am feeling
When I swing I sometimes forget the ones you love always
die.

I'll swing until I hear them again, or until my shoes stop pumping
I'll swing until my heart's loose ends are tied
I swing so I might feel the world once more
Even though it's the world that has left me torn.

I swing.
I swing.
I swing alone.

I swing because there's nothing left but
hope.