

Perfectly Chilled

The storm's a blizzard and Dad
calls me at Mom's to ask
if I think we should go.
I'm twelve, it's Christmas vacation,
so I say *Yes*, and we ride the slippery highway,
snow, obliterating vision,
police closing the road behind us.
When he stops to call ahead,
his head is all we see
in the buried phone booth,
but the snow gods are on our side—
at the hotel, we're the only guests,
Dad, his gorgeous Swiss lover,
my classmate-friend, and I,
snow-bound waiters with nothing to do
but serve the four of us,
and I love it, the box lunches,
days alone with my friend
on the soft and empty ski slopes,
evenings playing Scrabble—
and New Year's with Dad,
his bottle of Champagne
on the window ledge disappearing,
dropping down a twelve-foot snowdrift,
Dad cursing, laughing, relaxed
as he never was with Mother,
retrieving his celebratory wine,
chilled to perfection.

In Unison

Years before she leaves my father,
before she's subsumed
by wine's delusion,
Mother's doing exercises,
Jack LaLanne in shades of gray.
Too young for school,
I lie beside her, absorbing
her body warmth,
her comforting fragrance,
allies on the carpet,
lifting our arms
toward incandescent light.

WTF!

My father's initials on our towels, and luggage too, William Thomas Foley, known as Bill Foley to his golf buddies, but Dr. Foley to most everyone else, we children trained to answer the phone like secretaries, *Dr. Foley's Residence*, to rush the door each evening, offering succor. He'd ring his name in Morse Code, banging the doorbell hard so I sprang from my games. If I failed, he'd enter my room and tell me, with arched lips and brows, *You've missed an opportunity to please*. Oh, it was easy enough, to fling open the door. The hard part was after, meeting his gaze.

Will

Overpowering his
desire to stay dry
with mine to swim,
my thighs'
insistent pressure
around his warm belly,
my horse and I,
over our heads
in summer water.

Stefan's Heaven

I visit him in his attic loft, *Stairs straight to heaven*, he says. I like the firmness of his step, boots, jeans, tweed Italian cap, Polish lilt, his barely escaping the holocaust, his dog, content beneath his desk. He serves cognac in little glasses, regales me with stories of Kabul, his Fulbright in Afghanistan, mountain women with their chiseled legs, illiterate men singing poems on the street while sweeping. Soon he's taking off my shirt, we're falling into bed. Wakeful as he sleeps, I browse his desk: glasses, books, papers, an old bronze reading lamp, an I.D. card, his birth date—not forty, as I thought he said, but sixty—and I think: *I'm twenty-three and he's almost dead*. Tired at last, I return to heaven as he sees it, sleep like the dead.