

Waiting for Peas

The peas push up out of the soil
Like hope.

They weather April flurries and harsh winds
Persevering, waiting for warmer days.

Growth is as slow as days indoors,
Apart from others.

The peas stretch, casting tendrils, they whirl and sway
Longing for something to cling to

We cast about, finding new ways to support each other,
needing music, humor, good news
to cling to.

Stakes firmly planted welcome the tendrils and
The peas climb, they will climb,
leaf out, flower, give sustenance.

We stay firmly planted, staying healthy,
Staying the course, waiting
for summer's bounty.

I dream of granddaughters in my garden
Picking peas when summer warms

Tiny toddler fingers
Perfectly sized
For holding green treasures.

I dream of taking off my mask,
Walking out to greet the girls
Hugs,
and hands,

Together.

Mur, or A Day With Maisie

Playing bus, lining up the chairs,
bouncing up and down, we name the stops
Where the toys get off.

Teddy is going to Trader Joe's,
Elmo to CVS;
Babydoll goes to daycare,
And Mousey to the library.

We take turns being bus driver,
Making a driving noise
When we steer the bus.
"Beep!" Maisie goes when we make a stop.

Out for a walk past street repairs,
We stop and watch the digger.
Maisie sees excitement.
I saw annoyance
Just yesterday,
But not today.

Maisie loves beans for lunch:
Black beans, green beans,
beans in soup, beans and rice.
She eats them all up and
wants more,
which she pronounces "mur."
I want mur too,
[But dare not ask.]

Before visiting the library, we pass the fire station:
"Where is the truck?" she asks.
"Out helping people," I say, remembering
The day she sat in the truck,
And, eyes wide as the station, watched the firefighter
Slide down the pole.

The library stage holds the toys
And the big chair with book-print fabric.
She sits, smug in the chair she claimed,
But not for long.
There's mur to do.
There are

castles and houses and towers,
To build and knock down.
There are pages to color, and letters to try.
“M”, the letter of the week at daycare.
Her letter.
I make my “N” for Nana, and
“P” for Papa.
We read about dogs, and search the pages
For dogs that look like Brando and Winnie.
Maisie borrows her first book.

In the late afternoon we are tired.
We watch family videos with Papa.
Cousin Ellie eating pancakes,
“I’m too sticky!” Ellie says; and we laugh,
Like we do every time.
“Mur,” says Maisie, and I concur.
We watch the 4th of July parade,
The day at the beach with Ellie,
And her breakfast birthday party video.

Babydoll and Maisie sit, rocking.
Maisie squeezes, and the doll
Makes a kissing noise and says,
“I love you.”
Maisie stops.
She looks at me with wonder.
“Babydoll loves me!”
I want Mur.

Birthday Suit

What was once
A Perfectly fitted,
newly knitted
onesie

grew into a school uniform
with scraped knees
and falling down green socks

then t-shirts
bell bottoms
curves and floppy hair
and grew
into

sweats-
baby weight
belly and boobs hold
silvery stretch marks
but,

needs must
slick hair
work suits
tall boots
dyed roots

and now-
my baggy, ill-fitting suit
spots and hairs
where I don't want them.
Happy Birthday.

A Maker's Life

Where did you go, my three-year old?
Lining up Sugar Babies row by row
Making circles and stars, singing
Farmer takes a wife then
Pop a candy in your mouth
Till the cheese stands alone.

Where the five-year old,
Cutting clumsy paper pinwheels
Punctured on a straw. Did it spin?
Remember the reprimand for being
Lefty-slow with a righty scissors?
That school-made one didn't spin,
But at home?
It spun.

And what of the nine-year old
Who painted, sewed, molded clay
The Dabbler Girl Scout badge
Carefully recording dates
In the handbook
Hastily pinned to the sash.

The awkward twelve-year old.
She sewed her own fingers on the
Ancient treadle machine,
skirts, shorts, no straight seams
But one spectacular A-line shift
A style she chooses to this day.

Remember that teenager?
All pouty poetry, pockmarks and protests
She sews her best friend's prom gown,
Bakes cookies and writes
Letters
To the boy she loves
Shaping unnamed bits into identities,
A maker of things
That weren't there before.

At twenty-six, how she grew
Knit one, purl one, slip, slip knit
yawn over, nap three,
make a sweater
make a baby
Knit one, baby two, baby three
A few dropped stitches but
Tight enough
To hold a family

Remember the mom?
Whose children painted,
Play-does, built
Tidepools in their bedrooms
Refrigerator-box puppet theaters
VHS videos of their stories
See that woman?
A blur in the background
Making clothes
Making snacks
Making a happy childhood

I found her when
She saw her mother
In the mirror
She is Nana now
She makes
Hats and ice cream
Gardens and memories
Bread and stories
Messes with granddaughters.

A stitched-together, messy, patchy,
life
She never knit the swatch
Just took her chances.

"Made for you, with love."

