

FALLOW FOR FODDER

Overwintered,
the fault line lay within her own
this cold mantle gray and stiff
and the heat that simmered beneath the surface
buried under layers of brittle darkness
yearned to be the light again
see the season shift with stubborn determined
stride but the climate stayed the same
there was no spring in her step
no summer gold in her hair
the fall had been swift and hard
and then the bleak weariness set in
the worry the furnace she could not stoke
and she knew she had to learn how
to feed the barren ground
seed the rotted fruits and
deadened roots within the grounded
façade she kept at home
but most chilly viral days
there was nobody around
and her languid muscles tried to
pull her through pick her up
as she warily watched the skies
and wearily washed the blankets
to cover up the cold blue scars
and idle dreams that slept

in hibernation kept

in hopes of pastime warmth

and fat blunt cigars

SUNDAY QUICHE

I break the eggs idly,
wondering if you will
soon walk into your
apartment with your latest interest
fresh from a family wedding
and if she'll glance at me
askew as if I am in
her little kitchen while she
cordially hands me the cheese
as I beat the yolks with the cream
in my old Fire King bowl
from the well-worn collection
once proudly displayed
in the renovated kitchen
I designed and used
in breakfasts past
that means nothing to you
just some stupid glass
from an aniline dyed
ash cabinet suspended
with my dreams
to pour into the empty shell
of a frozen pastry
as you clamor for the
Ruth Franklin prize pastel
as if it is a trophy
that you never even wanted
and made such a big deal
over the cost but now covet
and are determined to win
but are pissed that your gain
is slightly marred
by the ceiling that collapsed
now an unhung picture
of an open book on
a blanketed chair beside glasses
like our lives in disarray
the glass so easily broken
with the slip of a wrist
and the painting blurred
and obscured by a breach
like our vows
as I futilely wait for
the kids that you took from

me in violation
of a decree now grown
to come running down
the stairs chasing laughter
to help stir the slow grits
patiently
like old times

MAKE MINE OVER

make mine a double
her cliché du jour in lieu of
chocolate bonbons
melting on the sofa
she'd have her tonic with the
shattered shards of gin
fizz on the floor

she wasn't callous
she was merely hard core
so sweet she could insinuate
her way into the door
and then close it in
your face as she is
handing off relief

make mine yesterday
or whenever she came
to this how did she roll
she never slept and seldom
ate and the food that was
her ally had become
an utter boor

i don't like certain words,
she said, and don't spit
them out with glee but
i draw the line with your
bully pulpit sermons and
wasted time spent
beleaguering me to depth

make mine blame
that used to be occasional
before it was a strategy
and then wires got
crossed and signals got
mixed and suddenly she was
queen of your jubilee

and then off you go
like a switch back to
that reckless alter
altered-ego and she has to

call in backup since you lost
any semblance of reason
then found it
in your knuckles

make mine gone
you so-called sterling men
who curse us and treat
us this way or that and
are hard pressed to show
whichever angry face
shows up in the fray

make mine over
she lay her stoic face
on the cool damp pillow
and wondered why it
always seemed to end
this way endlessly
no way to deny

MELLOW MUTINY

Remnants of wrappers from
convenience store snacks and
Swisher sweets
tossed carelessly about
the cluttered table
and finely crushed crumbs
on the floor in a
forgotten trail
rapping beneath red hoodies
riding shotgun
loose leaf in hand
legs entwined
amongst the circle
no longer minor
nodding briefly on the patio
out back duly
acknowledged and above
reproach
a brief hug
a son in transit
alone in metropolis
not so much a part of their
reality anymore
nor the disconnect
never missing a beat
as the teen girls upstairs
are clomping and gossiping
and giving directions as they
painted new faces
two faces while my daughter
slept soundly missed
by the hour
in hollow truth reputed
surrounded by former things
of childhood among
discarded clothes
and some unfamiliar faces
offering a civil chilly front
as an unwelcome reception
estranged with predisposition
in a moment of mild rebuke
and their tacit rebuttal
besieged unwittingly
with deceptive humor and

mingled makeup
crushed beneath boots
and bare feet treading
lonely in the same town
stepping over hot irons
and cross curls
separately projecting
their next move
no yield
no merge
only to converge
yet never crossing
the saline street
where a mother awaits
quietly

LOOSE PETALS

she tells her mama,
hush, don't talk,
if she does,
it upsets the balance,
but mama speaks
irreverently for naught,
disgusted with the
random dalliance,
you can't fake normal
but you can circumvent crazy
and she never was one
for plucking daisies