

“Nature or Nurture?”

*Which is stronger: maple or oak?
many might ponder that question I spoke
not I I thought
I descend from both
as a Maple Leaf and a Charter Oak*

“Memere’s Kitchen”

her white oven flanked by two chairs rocking
the fridge adorned with magnets and prayer cards
the Pledged oval table made white during supper
six padded wooden chairs
stacks of knitted doilies waiting for duty
the thin dark carpet that hid everything

the washer topped with newspapers
the dryer topped with everything else

the kitchen sink with four mirrored squares above it
the hand towel inside the door of the lower left-hand cabinet
the potato-peel bucket below in the lower right-hand cabinet
the dull, faded peeler
the drying rack with its juice glasses etched with yellow flowers

crochet needles resting inside oblong balls of discounted yarn
multi-colored afghans draped over women’s laps

Pepere in his glider with his firmly-planted, slippered feet
the key to the shed hanging to his left above him
his Moxie and evening orange set on the table before him
his paper, held open by trembling hands
his cough, a daily reminder of years inhaling near the mill

the hum of the humidifier
stove water bubbling
Edith Piaf singing “La Vie en Rose”
the whistling, whisking log trains
game shows
merci beaucoup
je tem beaucoup

shepherd’s pie baking
meat pie baking
apple pie baking
the faint smell of sulfur

and me running through in my underoos

“In Loving Arms”

*In loving arms we made you,
willing you to our world.
We wished for you,
we longed for you,
our love stretched out unfurled.*

*With loving arms we stroked you,
sending love from the outside in.
We felt you kick and wiggle,
as your exit prepared to begin.*

*In loving arms your life began,
with doctors poised to greet you.
Their skill gave your heart
the strength for us meet you.*

*You were beautiful
and perfect
and daddy to a tee.
We gazed at you and cried with joy,
as relieved as we could be.*

*In loving arms you settled
into a safe and warm cocoon,
tended to by careful touches
from those who ran the room.*

*Gentle nurses, caring doctors,
ever watchful mom and dad
our loving arms surrounded you
protecting your tiny glass pad.*

*And in loving arms we cradled you
while we whispered, sang and rocked.
We wished so hard to will away
the day when this could stop.*

*In loving arms we brought you home
and settled you in your bed.
Then admirers came from far and wide
to see you and your little toe head.*

*With loving arms we cared for you
the very best we could.
We did everything we were taught to do,
just the way we should.*

*And in loving arms we tried
with our every breath to save you.
Wanting more time to share with you,
because, our son, we craved you.*

*And in loving arms we held each other,
as we learned your life had passed.
A moment we will loath forever,
one we wish we could torch with gas.*

*Some in our midst will find comfort
from visions of you at rest
in the loving arms of your Papa
cradling your sister and you to his chest.*

*Others will step out in the night
gazing up at the clear, dark sky,
and feel certain that you are twinkling above
forever and always close by.*

*For us we cannot yet fathom
how we will bear the loss of you.
You were our son, our light, our joy,
and our future through and through.*

*But rest assured, our little one,
that more loving arms await.
They are those of our family and friends
who will help us with this great weight.*

*They will carry us for now,
hold us close and help us cry.
And for now that's simply what we'll do
forever wishing we knew why.*

*Your life was spent in loving arms
and in those same arms we'll stay.
Ever grateful for the time we had
only wishing it weren't taken away.*

“Mother of Two”

*I rise each morning grateful,
for I wake as the mother of two
living children.*

*She wakes as the mother of two
buried.*