

## **Test-Subject Son**

Grammy's sprinkled cupcakes for breakfast,  
a half-moon bite in a stack of bologna  
while his momma slept.

String of her boyfriends...  
shabby apartment shared with the stable one  
reluctant sitter during her graveyard shift.

Deadbeat parent, to faceless sperm, to new father...  
"Daddy" but never "Dad"  
stutter stuck on his tongue.

Surname different from hers  
and the one someday shared with sisters  
years younger.

Innocents, oblivious to his position...  
unchanged by legal ceremony and years of  
playing house.

## **Fly Home**

Youthful hands, cover her face  
nursing in the dark morning hours,  
peach-colored prom dress, milk-soaked and heavy  
with the weight of worry-  
a fortuitous camouflage for spilled cheese soup.

Passionate hands, cracked and bleeding  
for the price of minimum wage,  
searching pages, opportunities  
pecking p's and q's on an electric typewriter,  
correction spool nearly spent.

Dimpled hands clapping,  
delight at familiar pictures  
holding the boy and his thick cardboard book,  
"If I had a Little Airplane," he promises  
"I'd fly home to you."

Olive hands to steady  
a T-Ball stand and mold a Pinewood Derby car.  
Time introduces a father,  
an architecture of fortitude and family  
expectations with each strike-out.

Crystal glass in hand  
velvet wine muting her throat,  
no more bed-time stories  
Dreadlocks in a VW Bus buzzing in at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour,  
the tether taut between them.

## Fly Home

Hands shaking, a pancreas-  
three cracks at college and Chicago ER  
Mountain peaks and passes and powdered snow  
between them  
“I’ll fly home to you.”

## **A Galaxy Far, Far Away**

She keeps the Star Wars collectibles in boxes  
in the garage attic.

Han Solo forever searching  
through plastic confines,

Wampa snow-creature, white and furry,  
frozen in predatory pose,  
beloved by his baby sister,  
fangs and all.

She thought about selling them  
once,  
at a garage sale.

The couple inquiring, casually checking  
eBay,  
bids on comparable treasures...

In the end, she couldn't  
let go,  
sealing the worn flaps,  
packaging tape stuck  
to her fingers.

## **Radio Flyer**

Pieces of a motorcycle  
contained in rubber tubs and a rusty Radio Flyer wagon,  
disassembled beyond reconstruction—  
cluttering the third bay of my garage.

Like a messy guest,  
a bad influence of a friend-  
he couldn't ride a bicycle until he was eleven for Christ-sakes.

Like some grade B, Lifetime movie's  
overdone attempt at foreshadowing-  
his first father figure damaged his brain  
soaring from a motorcycle.

For years, I've housed the puzzle-pieces  
of this monstrosity, guaranteed my boy's safety,  
my ability to sleep.

Now, cleaning the garage,  
mattresses and broken dryers,  
and bikes of thirty-year-old sons  
have to go.

The truck is loaded with the wagon,  
and hundreds of parts  
the boy will "never be able to reassemble."

After the five-hour trip  
to Gunnison  
and delivery of this devil's  
shell and all its guts...

Fly Home

Will I admire the spacious garage,  
only ghosts of Radio Flyer wagons before the rust,  
shiny and red?