

*les enfants de M. Gloupier*

Old money. Old men's money.  
Old men's money thrown  
in the faces of their beneficiaries  
while they throw stones at their benefactors.

*Whiteness* everywhere.  
Whiteness in contrast to the skin  
of the whiteness in contrast  
with the brown.

Small children throw pies at old white men.  
Laughter overshadows the timidity  
of the young. Adult laughter overshadows  
the discomfort of the middle.

There is something here. Something bubbling  
beneath the years that separate  
now from these men.  
Deep seeded, buried deep, deeply held.

What is wrong with this picture?  
It's just some kids throwing pies.  
It's just children. It's just whipped cream.  
Kids stuff.

Just kids stuff. Of course.  
But can't kids see ghosts more easily than adults?  
Don't kids find the things that their parents  
can't see? Just kids stuff, alright.

Too bad the pie pans are silver and not gold--  
then there would be more to work with.  
Too bad the kids could only use their arms,  
and not bows, slingshots, spears--  
then there would be more to work with.

But pardon my overtness.

A woman missed the activity.  
*We didn't know you were coming Barb!*  
*Oh, Kathy I'm so sad I'm late.*  
*Becky is that you?! Oh you missed so much fun.*  
*Next time, Karen.*

Just kids stuff. Before the violence,  
in the castle, there was a flour girl  
in a cardigan.  
A dainty little flour girl in a cardigan.

What are you doing here?  
Where did you come from?  
She would be circled on the worksheet,  
*Which of these does not belong?*

It would all be reduced to a chuckle  
on the quiet journey home. Here too,  
no one really said what happened.  
We laughed at it, but even beneath that laughter,  
deep seeded, buried deep, deeply held--  
something simmered.

When you lived in my city

There were geese in the courtyard  
of your apartment complex.  
My brother  
chased them while we sat  
on the swinging bench.  
I loved your strawberry sparkling water,  
and every time I saw them on the wire shelves  
of Sam's Club or Publix  
I begged my mom  
to buy them. They've been discontinued.

We crossed over the threshold  
into your probably one bedroom home.  
It looked like the 80's,  
or maybe the 90's,  
I wasn't alive  
for either, so they may as well be the same.  
Yellow beams filtered through the plastic  
on the windows, dust blurring the time.  
Your mother sat still in a corner recliner,  
her eyes gazing glazed over by time.  
Your father sat at the abbreviated  
kitchen table, held there by whatever newspaper  
he read. I've lost his voice, if I heard it.

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You have been writing me a letter  
for over five years.  
How many years?  
How many pages had you written  
on that day when the geese  
bit my brother?  
In 2013 you had 184 pages.  
How many times  
must it go to the editor?

## Bathroom Salon Sestina

I have seen your hair  
take on many different  
shapes and colors, from  
short and orange to long  
and silver. There have been  
undercuts and mullets and more.

You went to St. Thomas More,  
I went to public school. Our hair  
would have fit in better if we had been  
in each other's place. You were so different  
from everyone there-- I'm surprised you stayed so long.  
But that's where you came from.

Catholicism and country clubs, that is. I was from  
schools that always had more  
students than textbooks. But I longed  
for the halls where they policed hair.  
At least they had enough desks for all the different  
students. You had never been

to my school, that's how it had always been.  
One day I helped you dye your hair from  
blue to red. I asked *Why?* and you said *It's different.*  
Your answers were always short. I wanted more.  
Once the chemicals had finished and your hair  
was its bright new shade, you offered a *So long!*

and sauntered away. It was a long  
time before I realized how deep I had been.  
I thought I loved your hair,  
but what I felt was far from  
just stroking your locks in my mind for more  
hours than I would like to admit-- I feel differently

now-- I don't love you. I was in a different world then. I lived only while longing to hold your hand, touch your knee-- so much more than the hair salon we had been running for years in my bathroom-- from when we used safety scissors to cut baby hairs.

The more you tried to be "different," the longer my hair got--  
It's always been crazy how much you can learn from hair.

The mole on your back.

Holding hands is a sorry excuse  
for an embrace.

Hugs intertwine only arms  
and simply press torsos together.  
At least a kiss adds another one or two  
minglings of fleshy appendages.  
Even in the same twin bed,  
there is too much liminal space.

I want to unzip your spine,  
crawl into your dermis sleeping bag  
and align our musculatures.  
I'll even tie our medulla together  
using our basilar and vertebral arteries.

Using your (our) hand, I (we)  
will zip you (us) back up.  
Then you (we) can go curl up,  
warmer than ever, two inside one.