

Helicon West & the USU Writing Center present

Nobody Likes the Elderly

By: Carrie Farmer

For Ma and Pa

The air will get close and heavy in the house
And we will learn that you cannot be trusted
To switch off the burner under the teapot, or even to stick around.
You will realize you have the wrong limbs, wrong faces
And that some of your parts will come off or out,
Which you will ask us to retrieve for you from containers.

The old fevered battle of love-making is reduced
to a low-grade bicker.

Monday you were politely escorted
out of the grocery store.

And silver is left on your pillows
like V05-scented straw.

Her jaw will thicken like his;

His thighs will soften like hers.

The chlorophyll of manners will drain into the ground,
Revealing that the yellow of annoyance, the orange of disgust,
And the red of rage were always there.

Then we will place our hands on the clammy backs of your necks:
You will recognize that you no longer belong here.

Excerpt from “For my Father”

By: Jacoba Mendelkow

In my picture, the one from when I was small, I sit on your lap. You were handsome then, handsome now—ladies always loved you, didn't they, Dad? In the picture of us, you have a mustache, smaller than the one you wear now, uncurled at the ends. I sit on your lap, chubby face, rounded fingers, pockets of baby fat on my arms. Were you watching television? Were you watching my mother? You were smiling at something, like you were happy with me in your arms, like you knew this was where I should be, like we might always be together, like our family would stick it through. We sang songs together when I was a child: *Families can be together forever, through Heavenly Father's plan*. But we weren't together forever, and I wonder now if we ever really were.

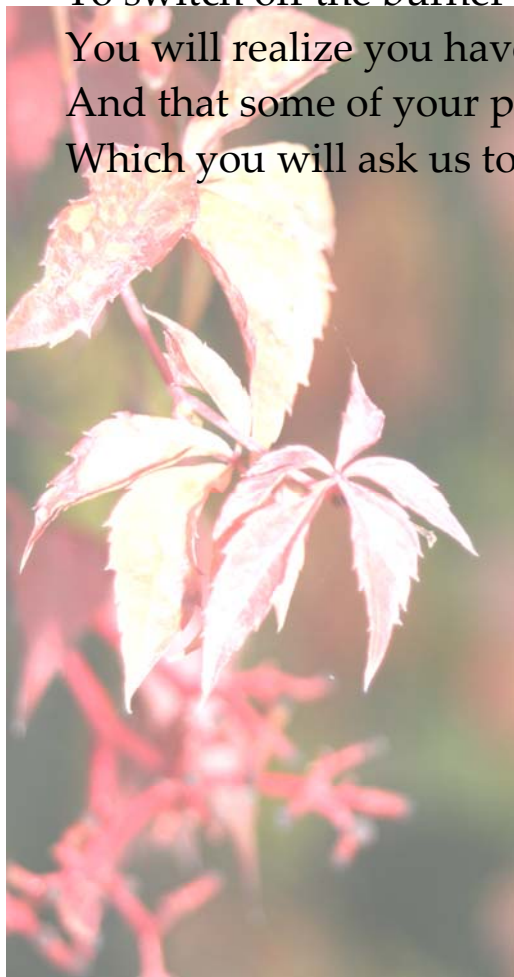
But my mother couldn't stick it through and I don't know if I blame her or you. You could have been faithful, said no to the woman in Nebraska, the one I blame for everything. It is harder to blame the second, the woman you married, the mother of my little half-sister. Hate is poisonous and I see how it has made you different, wrinkled your face, darkened your teeth. Sometimes in the light, when the sun is shining and hitting the hair on your low-positioned brow, I see flecks of grey, markers of what this deceit has cost you. The price was high for everyone, for my mother, for myself. I lost my own marriage, failed because I could not stick it through, finding his need for other women a punch too heavy to handle. I knew that men sometimes leave more often than they stay. But when I was seventeen and engaged, you told me marriage was good, sometimes, that I could probably make it with Matthew. But when I couldn't make it after all, when I finally left, I waited to tell you—knowing I had failed. Knowing I was like you.

Helicon West invites you to share our open mic nights every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month, 7:00 PM at Citrus and Sage, 130 North 100 East, Logan, Utah.

Broadside Co-editors: Cynthia Harmon and JP Peterson

Sponsored by: The Helicon West Planning Committee and the USU Writing Center.

For more information on the USU Writing Center, log onto writingcenter.usu.edu
or for more information on community broadsides, contact Star Coulbrooke at
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Photos taken by Ashlie Christoffersen

