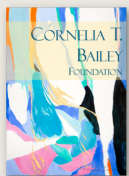




WWAG

Women Writers Accountability Group



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CLASS OF 1965 ARENA

02 By Elizabeth Douglas

Winter Vegetable

03 By Susanne Farrington

Listening

03 By Susanne Farrington

11 Hamilton

04 - 07 By Debra Forstenzer

Excerpt

08 - 09 By Anne Johnson

Late spring Hamilton NY

2021

10 By Joan E. McCarthy

Poems #2 - #4

11 - 13 By Joan E. McCarthy

Ode to Woodman Pond

14 By Judith Straub

Cold

15 By Judith Straub

Hanging On

(pondering pandemic)

16 By Sharry Whitney

Sipping Dawn

16 By Sharry Whitney

Backyard Swing

17 By Sharry Whitney

Minivan Nirvana

18 By Sharry Whitney

CLASS OF 1965 ARENA

By Elizabeth Douglas

Two men skate together
like foxtrot dancers,
one forward, one backward.
The man going forward seems terrified.
The man going backward is laughing.

A figure in a plaid flannel shirt flies past,
mouth open, drinking the air,
like a dog hanging out of a car window.
He weaves in and out,
playing hockey with phantoms.
His warm breath forms crystals
that swarm around his head.

A little girl steps onto the ice,
a rock-star princess,
zebra-striped leggings, pink tutu, tiara,
brand new skates stiff and gleaming.
She clings to the boards,
legs wobbling,
then glides for a split second,
looking up to the stands,
to see if her mother has witnessed the miracle.

Tomorrow—it will seem like tomorrow—
she will do figure eights
in the center of the rink.
And she and her friends will hold hands
and skate around so fast
the girl on the end will spin off,
and crash into the wall,
and they will all laugh wildly,
unaware of anything else in the universe.

WINTER VEGETABLE

By Susanne Farrington

I am stubborn as the beet
That has overwintered in my refrigerator.
Poised between being eaten
And being set aside one more time,
We were getting more soft and dried.

Then, decisively, I threw us outside.
There, on the compost heap,
Both of us grew a new set of leaves.
And the beet, with renewed force,
Soon sent up a flower stalk.

LISTENING

By Susanne Farrington

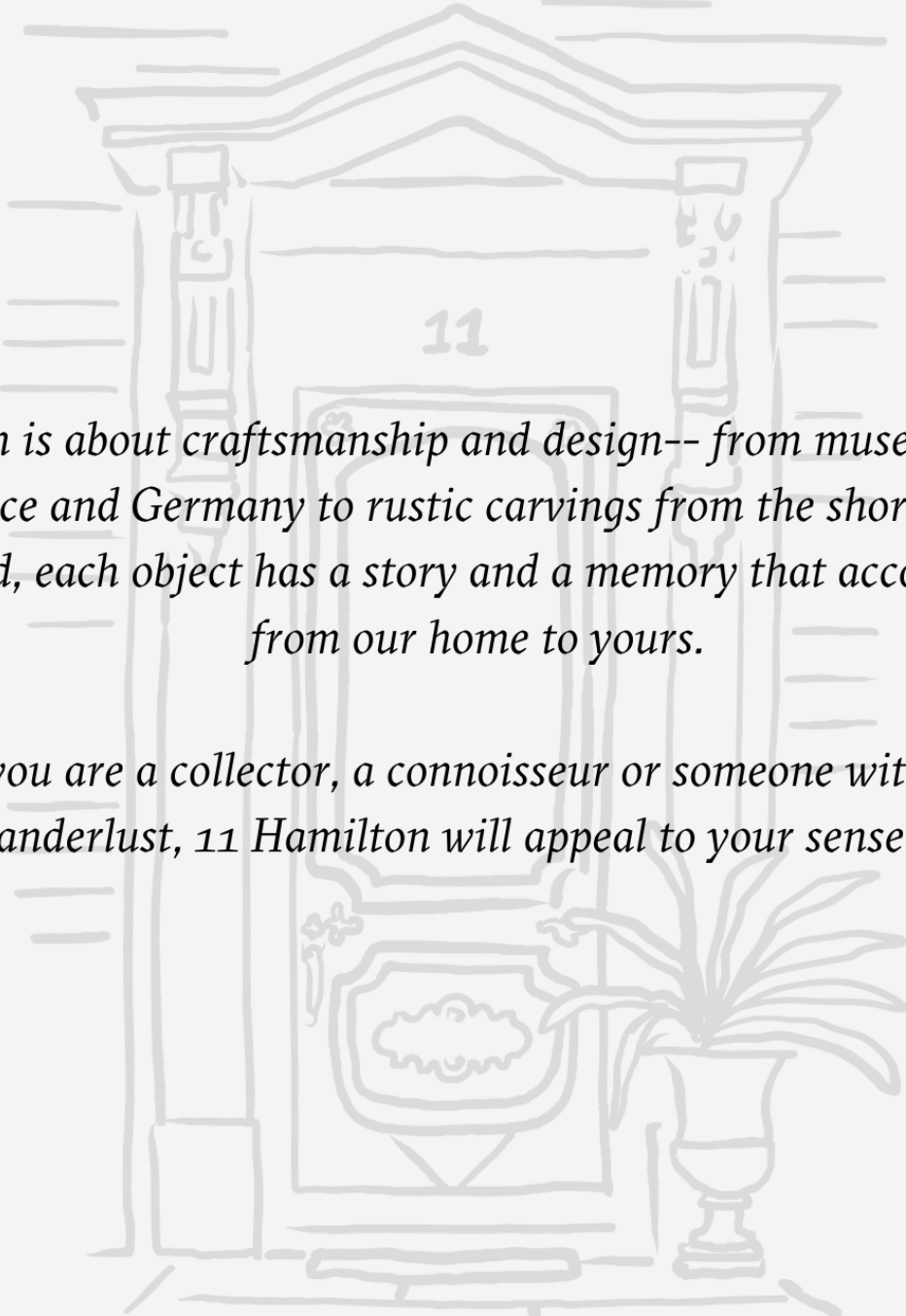
Attentive flowers,
The two narcissus blossoms
Stand at full attention on tall stems
Facing me in their vase on the table.

Their short, orange trumpets
Are slightly flared as if to draw in sound,
And they lean slightly toward me
To hear more clearly my measured words.

But alas, I have no answers
For the expanding climate crisis.

11

HAMILTON



11 Hamilton is about craftsmanship and design-- from museum quality art from France and Germany to rustic carvings from the shores of Eastern Maryland, each object has a story and a memory that accompanies it from our home to yours.

Whether you are a collector, a connoisseur or someone with a lingering sense of wanderlust, 11 Hamilton will appeal to your sense of discovery.

Welcome

11
HAMILTON

Speaking to the art



Conversation on a bench

South of France
oil on board

This diminutive scene begs you to write your own story. Do they know one another, or did they just meet? What is he asking her?
What will her answer be?

11
HAMILTON

Speaking to the art



A Tuscan Afternoon 1991

Florence, Italy

Watercolor on paper

Capturing a moment in time, a place you may have seen –
Viewing it brings back the memory of the heat of the day, the
beads of sweat on your brow, the person standing next to you.

11

HAMILTON

Speaking to the art



Mistakes Happen

New York, New York

Mistakes happen...We do, we undo. It's a process. Finally,
we X it out and move on.

EXCERPT

By Anne Johnson

Dear Taylor,

I probably shouldn't call you dear anymore-or babe or sweetheart, you're a lying, cheating bastard who lead me on for 12 years before I woke up and realized you didn't love me. Not the way you used to, the way I needed you to.

Do you remember what today is? Of course you do. Today is October 31st 2040. You'd be 35 soon, if you were still...anyways, it was today, Halloween in 2019 when you finally proposed. It was a big show, the whole fire department showed up with the trucks blocking the street as you led me down our front steps and got down on one knee.

Of course I said yes. I had been waiting for so long for you to ask me to marry you. I was so happy, and I thought we were happy together. My parents paid for the wedding, but your mom put her nose in everything-she didn't like the colors, flowers, and didn't understand why we were having my bridal shower at the fire house. I wasn't a firefighter, you were, but I was just your soon to be wife. And you didn't say anything, you just let her run her mouth. Thank God we never had kids. At least I don't have to deal with her anymore.

Kids. Another one of your empty promises. I wanted to start a family right away, but you wanted to buy a house first. I understood. Then the pipes in the house broke, so we had to do laundry and dishes at your mom's house for three months. After that it was something else, just one thing after another until you died.

I wonder what would've happened if your mother found it first. That hot pink thing that started everything, too small to be mine, and it definitely didn't belong to your mother. I listened to you beg for forgiveness when you got home that night, after I greeted you at the door without a word, holding up that scrap of fabric. I felt nothing as you fell to your knees, completely numb while you started to sob uncontrollably. "I'm so sorry! Please, please, forgive me."

I forgave you. I didn't tell my mom what happened, how stupid I was. I rationalized my pain instead-we'd been together since high school, of course you wanted to know what else was out there. You needed to know you made the right decision, getting married. Not that I ever doubted marrying you. I tried to understand, even pretended I did. But why did you question us, while I never did?

I didn't think it would happen again. Until I heard the rumors- you always got too drunk when you went out with the boys. Was she worth making me look like a fool, Taylor? In front of the whole fire department?

EXCERPT CONT.

By Anne Johnson

I knew what you had done when you came home that night. You reeked of her perfume. But your buddies told me the scandalous details. You two at the bar countertop, practically sucking each other's faces, sneaking shots as you tried to hide in a booth in the corner. Your hands, I don't even want to think of where your hands were. You thought you were so clever but they saw the two of you squeezed into the front seat of your car.

I told them we had an open marriage. Then I told you. And I shared my sordid stories, lies I read off the back of romance novels to make it seem like you weren't a cheater, that this was something we did together. While I desperately wished you would just come home at night.

I agreed to threesomes, tried all of your ideas to spice up our sex life. You wanted spicy, I just wanted you to hold me a little closer, maybe kiss me a little longer. The only thing I asked you was not to sleep with her.

I know I was your second choice. You asked her out after we broke up the second time and when she said no you came running back. I found out after we were married. What if she had said yes? Would you ever have come back to me?

She became a firefighter two years after you made captain of the department. That's when I knew our marriage was over. Did you tell them why you were really at the firehouse that day? Before you took your final call? That it was the only time you could see her without raising suspicion, and you hoped to God I would never find out?

I did. And I didn't say a word. But she knows I know. And I don't know why I'm writing this letter. Because I was hurt, but I've moved on. I understand now why you did what you did. It was terrible and I don't agree with it but I understand. You did love me, but you weren't in love with me. And I wasn't in love with you, I just thought I was. I was in love with the idea of being in love and being together forever.

You are a hero. That doesn't mean you're a good person all the time. But you died saving others and I respect that. You inspire me to be a better person. I forgave you- I don't think I was ever mad at you to begin with. I was just sad. You were my dream, but not my reality. I'll always love you for that. Don't wait for me beyond those pearly gates, be free. I'm breaking up with you to free you-free me. We should never have gotten back together. But we did. I thought I loved you. But maybe I didn't.

Your now ex wife
Cassie

LATE SPRING HAMILTON NY 2021

By Joan E. McCarthy

this
profusion of
peonies

citrus scent
perfuming
the evening

pom pom
puffs shades
of white

pink ruby
mounds blooming
bountiful every

where I go then
here a cardinal
flies

feathered wings
brushing by
my chest

lands near
deep red against
sidewalk

of pale
cement lets
me come close

sweet soul
plucking at bugs
ping ponging

to grass
to leaves
to sky

bright in flight
against the coming
night, against

green for
a moment, an
angel

atop the
small pine he
alights.

POEM #2

By Joan E. McCarthy

My mind

kaleidoscoping

through sex

toys, wall paper,

woodwork, thyme, the

rain, dismal grey

chaos in the moving

and disruption of

a household, the colors

not quite right.

Wondering about dreaming

new colors

into being.

POEM #3

By Joan E. McCarthy

a force

surrounding all of

course

the source

of now and how and

when

here with

in it did

begin

moving body,

mind in flow

ours each

is all

to know

yours this

through which

we go

and grow.

POEM #4

By Joan E. McCarthy

TABLEAU

1. Sailboat
2. Fish
3. Seagull
4. Crucifix

and a
table between
us

- a. his coffee mug
- b. sweatshirt a
- c. watercolor on the
wall of Willobee
behind him
- d. on the adjacent
wall, now hanging on a
random nail,
stumbled upon
cleaning out the
pantry earlier
this day.

ODE TO WOODMAN POND

By Judith Straub

I drive in
silence.
No one claims
the wide place
offroad
where we
park.
No birders
joggers
hikers
notice
skeletal remains
of summer
that front ashen
water
dotted with
ducks and
Canadian geese
who call
this pond
home.
A Great
Blue Heron
suddenly
soars off in
gangly majesty
miffed from
our rowdy
approach.
Dog sniffs
romps at
flapping wings.
Irresistible
incentive
to dive in
and chase
hope.

COLD

By Judith Straub

It is colder than
I like
Much.
I followed
you here.
No, it was a mutual
decision
Well, more mine
probably.
This small
college town
seemed better
for the kids
than moneyed
suburbs.
They would feel
normal
maybe.
Then you
met her
and
none of that
mattered
anymore.
My fault?
I did not adore
you
enough.
Wanted a partner
someone
who loved
adventure
spoke truth
from the heart.

She made you
the center
of her
being.
How could
I
compete
with that?

HANGING ON (PONDERING PANDEMIC)

By Sharry Whitney

I hang clothes on the line
because I have time.

I make lists.
I prioritize.
Time at the clothesline
had fallen to the bottom of mine.

I grasp a clothespin and feel the cool, damp
clothing submit to its grip.
The familiarity of the routine comforts me.

The sun shines as I look down the line of
wooden pins
standing at attention.
Doing their duty.
Holding me up.

SIPPING DAWN

By Sharry Whitney

Little downy woodpecker
in the grey dawn
clutches a rock
as she sips from the pond.
Inverted
up down
up down
Tossing her head back to the pearly sky,
her red cap emerges as she primes the day,
pumping color back into our world.

BACKYARD SWING

By Sharry Whitney

The newly born ash leaves
glow silvery mint.
Looking up from below
they glow.

A rush of wind
chases the silence from my ears
My hair sweeps the ground
as my toes reach, reach for the moon, up, up...
Then
falling back
sweeping through
falling blue
moonlight
dancing,
spilling over and around me
Breathe

Then
Rush! Rush! to the moon, flying higher, up, up...
I gasp!
Gravity wakens
Remembering me just in time.

MINIVAN NIRVANA

By Sharry Whitney

Between a sweet peach
and his feet
long, thin and brown
black, curly Hobbit hair
Pick a sunflower and I'm gone

Stop for gas and tomorrow's breakfast
25¢. for the coffee
nothing for the gas
We visit The Invisible Circus
and suicide
I kiss the frog's mouth
he is revived
She hugs me and I'm gone

5 of midnight
Stop for kindergarten snack
good mom
I pay for the gas
good karma
In the van
Nirvana

Turning right
it's midnight
The tangerine moon calls me...
left turn
 turn it up
 up the hill
louder still
 still for a moment
I am fulfilled.

Head home
my children sleep.
My dog is happy to see me
and so is Lance.
I scratch his head
and take them to bed.



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