

Sarah Sousa

Sulky

said word around town is that we're loaded
you shouldn't have told
the workman when he broke the antique Parisian lion
you don't even want to know how much that cost
people think our gate is locked to protect our stuff
say we have a ballroom filled with priceless antiques
art arcade games motorcycles lined up
in the garage according to color
why do you think the paraglider flew over
we can't have an alarm installed on our airspace
from above he can look all he wants at our once-
private view of hills cosseted as we are by stream
and trees birdsong the scent of honeysuckle
he went around and around until I retreated
inside what if he comes every day
with his wings and small engine
like we'd hired him like the groundskeeper
who mows the lawn and weed-wacks and keeps busy
around my perennial border you think
he was trying to get close to the barn's cupola
the unique weathervane which was stolen once
by helicopter before our time
a man riding a sulky the horse swinging
at the beck and heed of the wind east west north south

Don't you forget about me

I was sixteen, a hot July night at the drive-in
watching *The Breakfast Club* with my mother
and her boyfriend. He was fun, he was young,
he would become obsessed and want to kill us
but torched our car while we slept, instead.

This night was before the burning.

The three of us in the dark car, eating popcorn.

If I had to choose, I'd say he was the line

Don't you forget about me

in the movie's theme song

while I took

Will you stand above me?

and worked it into nightmares:

a dark figure at the door, a dark figure

in an idling car. I was murdered

in myriad ways: with a knife, a gunshot

to the head. Maybe he didn't realize

that a daughter is housed inside her mother

like the smallest matryoshka doll, the pea-sized one;

the way she looks out from the same eyes,

how a threat to one is a threat to the other.

He was young,

closer to my age than my mother's.

He was fun, when he wasn't

harming us. I kept the memory

of that night long past its usefulness.

Summer's short, savor the heat

and the three of us singing:

don't don't don't don't.

Church of Needles

You are the rusted barbed wire
growing into the tree.

You are the basement's basement
and its casement window stuck shut.

What the bellows are
to the downdraft, you are.

You are a view onto the underworld.

The funny sister.

You are the dig safe bag
over the live wire.

You are the baby's skull still parted,
You are the inspirations whispered in
You whisper them.

You are the watery hole on the pond.

The oil of lemons
the pucker
the batter-up.

You are my red shouldered
hawk, my hunting cabin.

You are Teddy Roosevelt's
mouse skin rug.

rebellious house.

You are the eggshell
filled with coffee grounds,
the rotting flake of salmon
in the center of the daffodil.

You are the Robins' breast,
the brown apple with brown flesh.

You are the harlequin
I am the box.

You are the pine tree's vapor,
a church of needles.

You hold the winning ticket
when they raffle me off.