

Wilderness House Literary Review 12/4

Carol Lynn Stevenson Grellas

A Note to my Mother after her Death

It's been chaos since you left
 but turmoil was always
 your alibi
 for an early departure. I've decided
love is harder to bear than grief
 if you need proof from
the other side.
 Sometimes I imagine you
 hanging
upside down from heaven, your hands
 probing through clouds;
 a thousand
angels gripping your feet
 as you try
to seize anything below,
 even me.

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Injured in the Line of Duty/ A Mother's Thoughts

In the darkness, my arms are the branches
of a tree that used to cradle you in the storm
But here in the daylight, I am drunk on sadness
and lost to the thought that time is fragmented,

a prayer broken interrupted by chance.

I was dreaming about you before
you were born and then god made you real.

There is something tragic about knowing

your ending is inevitable. If I was a bible
I would fold myself back to your favorite page,
I'd wait by your bedtable, I'd live in the ribbons
dangle over the unread. There are things

children don't know about their mothers,
old stories never shared. But all love
is based on trust, either in yourself
or someone else. Let's not discuss

the meaning of anything unless
we're willing to be accountable. Let's "be
what we pretend to be." Socrates said that.
my mother did too, but she was just

an illusion

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One Photo that has a Life of its Own

I used to smack the pavement
with my bare hands, count to three,
hold my breath and pray

for one more massive leap towards
the finish line before my knees
would give out and scrape bone,

my polished Mary Janes scuffed
and frayed, that frog hovering
through air like an acrobat,

my father's feet stamping the ground,
each of us chasing the shadow
of the other in a magnificent

stampede of unforgettable joy
that lasted one glorious minute
from start to finish and all

the years that followed.