

*Wilderness House Literary Review 3/4*

*Karen Kalsey*

***Faith***

A ribbon curled between the strand of beads  
and nestled on the bell that never rang,  
which always hung beside the angel. These  
things have always been. My daughter sang

*O Holy Night.* We cut out paper chains  
to trim the halls and strung each Christmas card  
above the mantle. These things have always  
been. Gleaming lights blinked in our small front yard

and backlit paper snowflakes taped along  
the windows. Both cats made their beds around  
the fire, or our feet. My children have  
all grown. The golden bell still has no sound,

though I hear carols in the night, and trim  
has graced the angel wings. Between those thin,  
small diamond shapes a light will glow-- I know  
these things are true, it's how they've always been.

**Winter Widow**

In Coeur d' Alene a red hued sun has sketched  
a portrait of the willows by the lake.

I watch her cut the last remaining rose  
before the frost. Her hand picks up a rake

and lets it play one garden song, a dirge  
of dying yellow. October glides away  
like eagles on a cloudy afternoon,  
that dive into the chill of Mica Bay.

Her pears and apples have been gathered up  
and brought into the kitchen. Soon the snow  
will cover every hill. She folds her gloves,  
remembering her daughters, long ago

this farmhouse had a family. Now deer  
become her children, blending in the mire  
of tawny dreams and cherry blossom springs.  
She shuts the door and huddles by the fire.