

Wilderness House Literary Review 5/2

Helen Peterson
Mother Cynic

On the balance beam between the caresses of home
children-couch-cookies-dogs
And the smog of living, expanding carbon footprints
to make the check pushing against the chain gang of
gender-economy-youth
with fettered hands grasping your ankles
the fall fatal giving in on one side
or another the ground beneath lost in the clouds

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Making Aunt Gracie's German Potato Salad

1. Handmade Dijon Vinaigrette:

Perfectly cubed new potatoes are carpeted by the smooth blend of mustard, flour, and vinegar. A secret family blend she pressed into my hand, paper soft with age, in the hospice.

2. Skillet Fried Bacon:

Snaps as the fat flows away, leaving crisp strips so rigid they shatter easily under the fork's pressure. Uncle Mack loved bacon best. He'd sit, eyes glued to the table for hours, waiting, refusing a meal without meat. Now he stares with like-minded intensity at the mustard colored walls in the hallway, refusing to enter the room and its smell of death

3. Vidalia Onion Slices:

Bring a peaceful union, turning sweet and soft in the hot bacon fat before falling in the bowl to embrace and bind bacon and potato together. After the stroke, she never could hold a knife long enough to peel, a spoon to blend. "No one made it like you did" cousins would shake their heads, as she wept into the vegetables.