

**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.