The Red Wheelbarrow

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens

-William Carlos Williams
She was sitting at his desk, monkeying around on his computer, and her books were piled up on top of his carefully ordered stacks of manuscripts. “Hiya,” she said without turning around when he walked in the door. He went to the window behind her and stood there a minute, hands in his pockets, watching the snow melt outside. Then he picked up her restaurant-ware coffee cup and tossed back the last of the herbal tea she’d made. Without removing the teabag, he flung the cup as hard as he could at the floor. It landed with a “plink” and rolled onto the carpet, the teabag flopping out like intestines. “What are you doing?” she shrieked. He walked over and retrieved the cup and the teabag, put the mug on the desk and tossed the teabag into the trashcan. “Just wanted to see if it would break,” he said, and left the room.
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the lagoon shape of the pool. The waves cast beautiful, rolling shadows on the ceiling and the walls; some people like to stay and admire all the peacefulness, but I’m usually sick of the place and my lifeguard chair isn’t so comfortable.

At the end of my shift I climbed down the ladder and felt the strange moisture of wet tile beneath my feet. I heard the shush of opening doors and looked casually over, expecting to see some old man with veiny legs coming to pick up his teenage bride so they could go back to their room and sleep tragically on their separate beds. But she wasn’t an old man.

She looked into my eyes with so much confidence that all I could do was point to the pool regulation sign. She was breaking a lot of rules: She was wearing shorts and a T-shirt, she hadn’t taken a shower in the dressing room and besides, the pool was closed. Stepping to the edge of the pool, her body rose slightly as she took a breath and dove in with the smallest perfect splash. Her hair, which had been held loosely up, came undone and rose around her, swirling above her head. Following the curve of the bottom, she pulled herself through the water with slow, powerful strokes and kicks. She was swimming above her shadow; a second one was cast in the ceiling, distorted by the waves. When she reached the other side, she turned and pushed off the wall, spiraling a few times. She swam back, more slowly than before, and upon reaching the other side, she pulled herself out with one fluid movement. When she was standing, she took an easy breath as if she hadn’t been holding it for two minutes. She looked at me once more and walked out.

The pool was completely still for a moment, save for the lapping of water. The tourists padded quietly out, wives glaring angrily at their open-mouthed husbands.
Rain in Paradise
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At 11:30, long after the sun had set behind the rain clouds, all the tourists were exhausted from relaxing so much. They were peeling themselves from their pool chairs, getting ready to head to the elevators where they would stand and feel awkward in their swim suits. Like every night, the waterfalls reduced to a trickle, then stopped completely and all the lights but those underwater turned off. The water was still rippling from the kids and the people who try to swim laps but end up confused by...

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There's always the night when you sleep without covers, your skin attracting the dim light, your fingers splayed out on the faded sheets as if you are counting down to zero. Your mouth forms her sunken sign post, mimics the place where she might decide to climb out.

In the morning you choose clothes carefully, laying the brown sweater on top of the corduroy pants before you pull them on. It all fits strangely: even your white hair seems crooked. It's the feeling of stepping back into the dimensions of a body.

You let the toast burn, relish the harsh smell, watch as matter combusts into small flames.
Webbed Fingers and Toes
-Kat Mangold

My sister was born with webbed fingers and toes.
I saw her sprout scales from her eyelids,
and saw her gills take form on her neck
as she flapped like a trout in our bathtub.
My parents claimed to have seen her first step,
but I saw her instead angle her fins
just right, so she could reflect
the moonlight onto our walls.
I hated her for having more fun
in our pool than I could ever hope for.
She could glide from one side
to the next in mere moments,
while I putted behind in my floaties.
What I would have done for fins of my own,
to retire my play snorkel and rubber flippers
and soar through the water like lightning.

Inevitable
-Emily Dalton

Maybe you are thinking about the way
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half falling, half floating to the inevitability of the ground.
Maybe you are thinking about sex,
those tender feelings of skin against skin
that inevitably lead to one person penetrating another.
Maybe you are thinking about when we were young.
The way we sat out on the front lawn
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smoking them down to the filter in three draws or less.
It was inevitable that we would learn.
Frightening how fast carelessness of youth
becomes like an old photograph,
faded at the edges.
The Felix Café
-Phoebe Stutz

He wore the hues of the sea
Lapping up sun and sand along beach shores,
Dolphins riding his smile.
He made exquisite espresso with
Aged salt hands. Brown poured
Into man-made machines spilling
Out steam like a summer in Spain.
Bullfights being played to
Cheering crowds. The matador
Dressed in humming bird feathers
Sewn together by a grandmother
Crying for the lovers lost to
One-legged heroes. The nectar
Of Hyacinths scented her tears.
The blood of the bull pouring out
Into tiny cups brought to the table
By a waiter who thought he could love me.
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I came out of my mother's womb. There was some pain involved, some love, some passion, and some more pain, and I came out of my mother's womb. When I ask her about it, she tells me, "You were easy enough."

But searching her hollow eyes I know I caused her more pain than she lets on to, I broke her then and I crushed her by snubbing her bear hugs when I was three.

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My grandmother, too proud to admit she’s been listening, turns off the speakerphone and tells me to start the bath water, time for bed, got to get up in the morning really early for some unknown adventure. I imagine my grandparents and I trekking across California in an effort to outrun the neighbors who have finally found their black lab strangled to death in the back yard, hit men hired to kill people who don’t show up at jury duty, and Dan’s entourage of women, angry with axes and gossip about the other. I used to really like that dog. It’s lived next door to my grandparents for as long as I can remember. My grandmother will probably die on this trip, because she can’t handle the stress. I’ll be the only one who notices because the unceasing flow of words will have stopped and my grandfather will keep on driving, his cracked and wrinkled hands wrapped hesitantly around the steering wheel, unable to hear the

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speed of sound. Tell you about it sometimes."

"James," she says. "She doesn't care about planes." His face crumples into the largest and tiniest wrinkles I've seen and his face looks so old I feel as though I don't recognize him at all. He has become a face like a bad sculpture in junior high art class, like a fuzzy and smudged cartoon from an early Disney experiment that was never expected to work.

"Goodnight," I say.

"Tomorrow we'll get avocados," she says, smile and walk down the hall past Dan's room. He's left a note.

Pam's mad. Must soothe women before parents. One mitten has been left behind on the floor. I take the old photo albums from the early 1900's down from the top shelf and to the dining room where I flip through until I see the letter on the table calling my grandfather to jury duty the next week. I put a red mark around it and a note to call them.

I pick up the newspaper and find my grandmother's latest sewing of a Thomas Kincaid picture, which appears to be only half finished, the stitches tattered and loose. I walk down to my hall to my bedroom on the opposite side of the house from my grandmother's and keep the sliding glass door open all night as I sleep, dreaming myself into a fit of instability until I wake up to my grandmother's shrill call to wake up and go downtown to get avocados. At breakfast, Dan arrives, frantic with only one mitten. He finds the other one in the hall and wears them until we watch It Happened One Night and he says Clark Gable's acting makes his hands sweat.

"I could've married Clark Gable," my grandmother says. I smile. My grandfather snores from his chair as she checks his crossword one last time for anything she's missed.

chatter he married at eighteen or even the end of it. We'll arrive back at their house at dusk and sneak in through the back driveway because the front is being watched and guarded by police, angry neighbors, women we've never met who Dan has had a full life with, and jury members all picketing the home of the family who ruined their lives.

"I used to fly airplanes," my grandfather will say in his eulogy of her. "I flew faster than the speed of sound. First pilot in San Francisco who did. Call me Jim. Did Morse code in World War II. Dropped bombs in Korea, I did. Saw Marilyn when she came to Korea. Front row, I was. Pretty good for a Private. Tell you about it some time if Betty isn't washing dishes. She doesn't like people talking when she washes dishes." He'll walk off and sit next to me in the pew. "Hello Andrea, he'll say to me. Pretty day for flying, isn't it? I once dated a girl named Debbie. I was quite the man, you know. I flew faster than the speed of sound. Made a noise in the sky you could hear for miles. The people on the ground thought the military was target practicing. Couldn't even see us. Come back and see me and Betty sometime." I'll go home after the funeral with a suitcase of plastic rhododendrons.

Golden Girls' final credits play. Dan comes back out to the living room and takes his jacket out of the coat closet.

"Going somewhere?" I ask.

"My chair in front of the television," he says. He zips the coat up to his chin and sits there. "This chair cost me three grand," he tells me. He's lying, or he's stupid, I can't tell by looking at him. No wonder he's had so many relationship problems. My grandmother comes back out shouting about a trip to the grocery store early tomorrow morning. "We need avocados. How do people live without avocados?" she wonders.

She turns the water on in the bathtub and I'm embarrassed because no one has even been in the same bathroom with me since I was five. She stands next to me in front of the mirror that is just misting.
over with a steam from the hot bath water. I see myself in fifty years even though I look nothing like her. Wrinkled and persisting, the red lipstick too bright for my face smearing on my teeth because I’ve made myself believe I need a little color, even if it’s not the right one, my husband sitting somewhere in the background of my life, but somehow so important and so annoying even if I just try to present that image to anyone who will listen.

“I was engaged at your age,” she tells me. “He went off to war soon after. Didn’t have kids until 1952. Ugly kids, Dan was the ugliest. No wonder he can’t keep a woman. But he’s trustworthy and real smart. Good man. Get in the tub. Call if you need anything. I embroidered an entire picture today, you know. I’m good at stitches.”

I sit in the bathtub after she’s left and close my eyes, trying to pretend I’m just one more princess, Princess of Spain, or Italy, Zimbabwe, even a Disney film. Anything to calm my life down. I hear a dog bark. I let the water out and dress quickly, walk out the sliding glass door of my bedroom and onto the deck where I can see the neighbor’s yard a few feet away. The dog, a black lab, is running around in circles, wrapping his leash tighter and tighter to a pole stuck in the middle of the yard. The owner comes out a few moments later shouting and swearing. “Damn dog,” she says. “You’re going to strangle yourself, you moron.” She waves when she sees me. I walk back into the house and through to the living room where my grandmother has fallen asleep on the couch with half a grocery list. She wakes up startled when I approach her. “Damn kids,” she says. “Go to bed, I killed a dog today and embroidered a picture today. You’re a sweet girl. Come back and see us sometime. I’ll miss having you around after you leave.”

My grandfather is snoring in his chair but wakes up when she starts talking. Forgot his earplugs. “I made a big noise in the sky,” he says. “Right when we flew over the bay. I flew faster than the
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At the end of my shift I climbed down the ladder and felt the strange moisture of wet tile beneath my feet. I heard the shush of opening doors and looked casually over, expecting to see some old man with veiny legs coming to pick up his teenage bride so they could go back to their room and sleep tragically on their separate beds. But she wasn’t an old man.

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Emily Dalton, Inevitable, poem
Allisin Wendt, Untitled, sketch
Brenin Wertz-Roth, Excerpt: Rain in Paradise, fiction
Rhiannon Stark, Matt, photograph
Liz John, Untitled, poem
Amber Bard, Untitled, photograph
She was sitting at his desk, monkeying around on his computer, and her books were piled up on top of his carefully ordered stacks of manuscripts. “Hiya,” she said without turning around when he walked in the door. He went to the window behind her and stood there a minute, hands in his pockets, watching the snow melt outside. Then he picked up her restaurant-ware coffee cup and tossed back the last of the herbal tea she’d made. Without removing the teabag, he flung the cup as hard as he could at the floor. It landed with a “plink” and rolled onto the carpet, the teabag flopping out like intestines. “What are you doing?” she shrieked. He walked over and retrieved the cup and the teabag, put the mug on the desk and tossed the teabag into the trashcan. “Just wanted to see if it would break,” he said, and left the room.
The Red Wheelbarrow

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens

-William Carlos Williams