

My Daughter On Wolf Hill Farm

by George L. Chieffet

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*The same year the hook and eye latch fails on a window
Grandfather fails on a treadmill. Wolf Hill farm is pounded into
rocks--Family history*

The fields run with wild roses as we gather dinner greens.
Then the roses bleed in the small rooms of another life.
Buckets sweat for rain in this bright month
when sleep crawls before an eyelash
and a moth dances over a folding bed.

Once her nose bud bled
into a basin where we wash underwear and banded socks.
Hot steam and the perfumed soaps
raise a soft rouge over her eyes.
Sunset conspires with the insects.
At night a stinging strawberry wildfire
burns down her shoulders.
Then for a tender week she lives suspended in blankets.

Time bleeds away, each day sheds like skin.
The edges curl and brown
until she folds her arms in a watchful photograph.
School paste runs out of glass,
she chews the teapot spout...
I save the teeth marks.
There is colored water in a margarine tub,
the tiny orange sweets she would soon tire of.

I survived as a brave thought,
as a wigged president on a silk dollar.
At ten I am an autograph,
a letter from a Belgian city,
a color snapshot in a corner posed by a tallish weed.

One August we paint weeping stars
and the roses grow tall, wild
thick as mosquitoes;
they swell our nights.
Soon terrible rains drown the wind,
yet the trees cry out for water.

On my last visit to the house
the hook and eye latch fails on the window.
briars smother the fields.
Old borders of the world are done,
limestone spikes mark the strange,
overwhelmed trees bow to our weakness.

Life has no smooth finish alone in a town built yesterday.
in last century's pictures I find no evidence
I was a father. Winter begins on my eyebrows,
wings cresting high on my forehead,
a fleshy smile soothes my temper,
now the days run wild through my face

