

Three Micros

by Kathy Fish

Friday Afternoon, Her Father's Music Shop

Zelda's got atypical tinnitus. She hears tenor sax, bouncing from ear to ear as if someone were turning a knob. As if Lester Young himself were held hostage inside her auditory cortex. She sits on a stool behind the counter of a second-hand musical instrument shop while her father counts change and talks with the customers. Zelda with her hands folded strains to hear their voices like whispers on paper like sheet music like ghosts.

Dalmatian

I dreamt of rulers and coffins dropping from the sky. Rulers, as in kings, emperors, dictators. Rulers in Persian dress with their arms akimbo and un-startled faces. Plain, pine coffins. The neighbor's dog is barking, whining. I push up the window. I love the woman in the polka-dotted scarf who comes here on Saturdays. I love her cool, white forearms turned out as she grips the handle of her bucket.

Faulty Keys and Latches

He carries a sort of purse and fills it with rocks. He likes the heft of it, how it dislocates his shoulder, makes the soles of his feet slap the pavement. He'll tell you he's heard the voice of Satan over the Sunday gospel radio. He'll tell you if you listen long enough the words run together like the teeth of a zipper. And therefore, it makes sense to have a weapon. He is lonely, but not unloved. He dreams of doors hanging off their hinges like dislocated arms. Of warped wooden doors that stick. Of faulty keys and latches. He

dreams of throwing rocks at the devil from the wide, broken steps
that lead to some porch.

