

## CHRISTINA FOISY

### What My Father Carries

The night my father carried the dog on his back up the hill, behind the house her body, wrapped in a chewed afghan, still warm from the night before, his feet sunk into the marsh with the weight, yet he continued, searching ground that was sturdy and somewhat haunted.

Before the dog, my mother's death left a space in the house that he could never fill. He began to accumulate what he could "one day" use to rebuild shattered bonds. The cemetery of objects left to rot in the rain: sheets of metal, pool ladders, chairs--weigh into the saturated ground as testimonies of what remains broken.

If only my father would dig a hole big enough to dump our house into-- as a renovation for his hoarded heart, a sort of mourning in re-recovery. He likes to call his things "antiques" saying: "you can't go out and buy *that!*" Because *that* doesn't have a name anymore.

To him, that nameless object might come in use someday, and that's enough. To name what he might need, will be like encountering a long lost friend on the street or a wedding photo in between a stack of magazines.

The dog would never leave his side, unlike the women who visited him with rented movies showcasing promises of moving-in and cooking his meals—all left a slipper or a brush behind in an empty seat at the table, now stacked with phone books.

The grave is all too familiar, dulled down to a silence we understand. Rocks stacked ornamentally around a sapling tree, my father engraved dog-tags, placed them carefully to mark her death and pissed around the mound periodically to ward off wolves and coyotes.

*Christina Foisy's previous work, both creative and academic, has appeared in POIESIS: A Journal of Art and Communication, the Journal of the Motherhood Initiative, and the WomanMade Gallery (in Chicago). She is currently a Ph.D. student at York University in Humanities, and student of the Toronto New School of Writing. Her research focuses on memoirs, life writing and poetry by survivors of electroshock therapy (ECT)—and the nuances of remembering/forgetting a life re-routed by shock. She also has a background in Creative Writing and Women's Studies (B.A. Concordia University) where she contributed prose and poetry to student-based journals and 'zines such as Subversions and Lickety Split.*