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Arc

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Arc

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ARC

By

Lisa L. Fountain, J.D., L.L.M.

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
Stephen F. Austin State University
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements

For the degree of
Master of Art

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

My collection, *Arc*, is about the struggle to become a human being and to find one's own identity. Also, it is about how humans fall apart and come together on a regular basis – that we must find forgiveness – we must learn to love in even the most difficult circumstances – and we must, above all, continue to grow, and challenge our personal limits. Life does not contain us –it welcomes us – and that is part of the message I seek to convey through my writing. The imagery in my writing is grounded in my memories of my childhood and my experience growing up in a conservative, religious, affluent family while remaining a closeted gay woman until I was 35 years old. My imagery deals with masks and costumes that protect our true selves from being seen – to protect ourselves from judgment, criticism or condemnation. My poetry also speaks to my love of nature both in the Texas Hill Country where I was raised and in the East Texas woods where spent summers with my grandparents. My poetry follows the “arc” of my life from my earliest memories to the present.

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First Impressions Are Everything

Hemmed in, laced up,
clothes layered from
bottom up, panties,
then tights, then slip
then skirt, finished off

by shiny shoes – black
patent Mary Janes
not meant for running,
climbing, hiking,
playing with boys.

Wearing what Mother
wanted, always crafting
a look to her designs,
silences, her rolling eyes.
For a moment, producing

a quick nod, granting leave
to represent her out in the
world, graded, judged
leaving the girl behind:
her room, her truth

hidden in a pile
of dirty clothes
covered in mud.

I.

Dead Set On

running—
scabby kneed
legs pumping—
ratty band aid hanging
on her index finger
 road rash
on her elbow
yellow jacket sting
on her shoulder and hands
dirty little fingernails
dirty bare feet
 slapping
hot black
asphalt
heated by the relentless
summer sun
 up one street
through a backyard,
up a tree,
down a hill,
careening through a culvert,
never still until
the flowers:
 bluebonnets
 buttercups
 indian paintbrush
 bees and
 butterflies
she bats away
as she picks
wet stems
and squishes
them into bunches
in her hands so that
she could run back

to mother
 an offering
 an apology for her presence
 the fact that she exists
she doesn't know
 she takes off running
 looking
for that something,
for that everything,
that nothing
she must have missed.

Length of Loss

Barbed wire
vibrates
like time
down a long
lonesome wire.

Liver spots
dot my hand
reminding me
time is nothing
but short.

Flowers record
their past
with seeds planted
to grow tomorrow.

You planted your seed
and I became
your future recorded.
where were you
when I was growing up?

Split

for my sister, Kathy

Does it matter
that he stood
drunk at the sliding door
banging away to be let in,
On the inside
Mother's whispered pleas
to go away – *please*

Lee – the children.

But there we stood, the two
of us, small girls hidden, tucked
in a dark corner, unseen
with hands and breath held
trying to understand
this vision before us
of our two worlds—
our universe—split
on opposite sides
of the glass.

Being A Girl (*Texas 1962*)

Women talk
boys move on
doing what they want

women listen
men make decisions
move through their days

numb to others
that's what I like
about boys

why be a girl
when being a boy
is so much more

fun, sitting on
the tailgate
bare feet dangling

in white dust
dragging a stick
carving a trail

in the dirt road
as grandfather
drives to the farm

where my grandmother
waits, secure
that I am sitting prim,

feet tucked in
shoes, on the front seat,
doors locked.

Trees

I climbed trees, as a child, any tree, every tree,
the mighty live oak out front, the thorny mesquite
the one with yellow-jackets
who stung every time on every climb.

She was warned. She persisted.

The white birch with its peeling bark
the one I never could quite scale
in my Sunday shoes and dress.

I fell from every tree I fought to conquer
battles fought with blood and bark
leaving scars on skin and trunk.

Climbing not to get up, get out, get away
but compelled higher and higher into the canopy
out further and further on each branch and limb
wishing – needing – to finally see.

Falling Stars

Little girls side by side
tiny rows of beating hearts
cocooned in blankets and quilts,
count falling stars
sliding across a black sky.
We adore movie night—*Oklahoma*—
know all the songs by heart,
shoulder to shoulder,
tiny girl voices rising as one.

Our flashlight beams criss-cross
in every direction, catch
in their glow the swooping bats.
We squeal with laughter and delight
then dive under covers to whisper
secrets never to be told
in that endless open night
among the ancient limestone hills,
the live oak bearing witness
to memories camp sisters made,
recorded, reel to reel.

I don't remember their names
just the beating of their hearts
I knew all these girls so well,
back then, back when,
out in the hill country, when
we were alone and young and counting.

Cave Lane

I always rode like a ten-year-old surfer
standing on the backseat's edge,

leaning forward, tiny hands perched
on the front seat. Our brown station wagon

was home to white sticky sand
amber yellow dried seeds of popcorn

slid down between the seats
from the drive-in movie with green

ticket stubs from last year's rides
at the San Antonio rodeo.

You swerved that old car like
a bull bucking, twisting, back and forth,

My panic rising with every one of your slurred words
pointing, screaming, banging your massive

shoulders with my meaningless fists
words on deaf ears – dead ears

you waving me back, waving me off
the Irish Setter loped in front of the car.

Those who should know didn't know
and would never know and me, wide awake

for the thudding, thumping, the sight
of the collision, vibrations beneath my feet

on floor boards as they absorbed
the breaking, cracking bones.

The broken glass of your vodka bottle
rolled back and forth, back and forth

and I collapsed—screaming
on the seat—watching blurred colors
as time raced away from me.

Irene

You were a woman of some girth
in your white uniform with your
practical matching white shoes
greyed with too many polishings.

You hummed as you cleaned
moving the vacuum from room
to room, laughing at our jokes
while we ate the lunch

that you created, then you
listened to grandmother review a
menu for brunch; when
we visited and Dad

sought you out in the kitchen
he always called you
“Irene the Queen,” he said
because “Lord—your food

is so damn good.” Your
obituary hangs in the house
of my grandparents—a member
of the family—been with us

since birth— isn’t it funny then, that
the family photos we all share
you’re always holding a tray
with something you prepared.

Rock Cottages (*Port Aransas, Texas 1972*)

We all sit at the square table
My father and his second
wife tell me all the ways
I am not right in the head

Later, out in the night
 solitary freedom
wind blowing salt and sand
 tangling my hair
sound of pounding surf
 muffling, beating out the rhythm
of my heart

the man in the vette
picked me up
gave me a joint
and lit it up
 I inhaled as deeply
as I could
letting the smoke
 take me where
reality never would

I don't remember the rest.

Later I dreamt
a serial killer
stalking my room and bed and I was powerless to stop
to stop
him my arms and legs

unable to bear weight
unable to defend against.

Phyllis

Treading water in the pool,
I look up and all I see
is your silhouette framed
against the sun like
it's your universe.

We're all screaming at you
as you bounce on the board
"come on – do the trick –
hurry up – get it done!"
you gain your balance,
neatly pirouette, knees
bent, back arched, you leap
in the air and that simple act
just flips all our worlds:
you were always the one
willing to risk getting hurt.

Tornado

It's like watching cars wreck,
everything in slow
motion, squealing brakes,
screeching metal, smells of burned
rubber, cracking glass, blurred colors
colliding one against the other,
a mass of debris whirling
around and around; as a witness
you hunch up, clenched teeth
squinted eyes in defense
against what's coming,

because this wreck will be a bad one.

Just like a tornado
plowing up a field
going on wherever it's going
we stand in frozen awe,
slack jawed, eyes transfixed
that huge black funnel, so
amazing and dangerous
you just can't stop watching.

He's like that: tall and entertaining,
colorful and loud – “what a hoot!”
life of the party whenever he drinks,
he's always center stage, “oh my
God, he's so funny.” But those of us
who know him dread the stillness amid
the circus – the air being sucked
from the room – that's when
we know one of us
is about to get hurt.

Marco Polo, 1969

Remember when David tried to rape you in the back of his van? You ran crying to me and we held hands – Jesus Christ, we’d all just been playing Marco Polo in your pool – you told me how he held you down behind closed doors – how you screamed for help – needed someone to stop it – we talked all night, I held you in my arms, stroking your blonde hair slowly over and over, thanking God you were able to run – You were strikingly beautiful for your age, older men had made us wary with their leering remarks that skirted wrong. But, David, what the hell, I kept thinking, why did he do that, he was our friend. I did not know yet with power comes domination in ways we were too young to understand. We talked all night, all night, all night and finally we decided silence was best. We did not tell.

Après Forgiveness

Loving you this way
honestly
freely
reduces the past
to fiction, reduces
your crimes to
innocence,
reduces my pain
to insignificance.
It's like having lunch
with my rapist.

Excuse me Madame
tea is served.

II.

Austin, 1974

Aromas of perfumes and powders
percolate out of the walls
of this house – olfactory echoes
of manners minded, of stolen
kisses under flickering gas
light casting shadows of others
before us framed by tall Doric
columns on the wide open
porch of this white colonnaded
house framed by succinctly
manicured grass. Generations
of girls lingering on the wide
open staircase winding up
to the forbidden floors
of those who are chosen,
like my mother before me
and my sister after her.
Chosen for no reason other
than some mysterious genetic
code tucked discretely in
our souls. Generations of girls
playing out the rules as we
learned them, upholding traditions
handed down to us, knowing it
was like that for them and
it will be like that for us.
So chin up, girls, put a smile on
your faces and a song in your
hearts as you trudge on this lonely,
isolated path towards what
they call womanhood.

The Toad

Fat bitter little toad
fogged hot breath
steaming tendrils
your nose presses
the glass of your
upstairs window
in the Zeta house,
you've gathered with
your sisters, clamoring
to see who sits in
my parked car at night.

You may hate who I am,
a simple heart beating
with love, but you want
what I have, disguised
in your designer best,
whispering, pointing, croaking
as you look for the blonde
in my car, what you cannot
see, you assume.

Hornets

Angry red hornets
 hovering
at my window
 at my door,
 buzzing,
 berating,
 belittling.

Let us in they say.

Reddish orange wings
 moving
up and down,

 loitering,
 lingering,
 hanging around.

Petiolate abdomens slashed with
yellow and brown.

They whirl at my threshold

 pleading,
 wheedling,
 needling.

I will not open
 my door.

Ovipositor
 or imposter
 it matters not.

Their sting is inevitable – love is lost.

Rose

I'm done with her
roses left drying

in the sun
heart made

of stone
gilded in gold

heart made
of gold

encased in stone
heart muscle

atrophied
by time alone.

I am dried
and done.

Water

Water made holy
the hell boiled
right out of it.

when you last saw me
I knew nothing

of your soul
forgive me

with this water
made holy, holy, holy

for you – only you.

Dam Pants

Texas is so hot in the summer
your tennis shoes melt on the asphalt
even if you're running. Just a bunch
of kids, we ran to that cold, spring
fed river, donned our "dam pants,"
beat up, blue, button fly Levis that
we used to slide down the mossy, green
dam, the seats of our pants
wearing thin each time we slid,
some of us daring it standing up,
climbing back up to linger
on the dam's edge, letting the water cool
us as it fed around, under and
and through us. We lived not knowing
we would ever grow up; that all the laughter
we were hearing and the joy we were feeling
would echo in our hearts for years to come.

Light

Nights awash in light,
young girls in sparkling,
shimmering gowns,
necks aglow with strings
of their mother's pearls,
and young men in white tie
black tails, smoking
Raleigh cigarettes,
all of us laughing
at how serious the older
ones had become.

Inside the Mardi Gras Ball

Twelfth night, a night filled
with men in white tie hiding
who they are behind masks.

Everyone attends the ball.

He calls out for a dance, girls
in gowns and jewels, jeer and
cat call, as you make your
way to his white gloved hand

extended, an invitation to dance.
He draws you near, a gentle
hand on your back, you learned
long ago, to follow his footsteps.

Ungoldilocks Me

Sit by my fire
feel my warmth
feel my heat, hear

my pop, sizzle
and hiss, hew
to my light, see

my sparks float
on air, talk to my
crackling soul, melt

into my red-hot core,
give me heat, not
lukewarm, not

just right, Goldilocks
I am not, give me hot
scorching, steaming

scalding heat with
a price to pay
or leave me alone.

Double Dating

Her father calls our evening dresses “lovely costumes.” He speaks my truth and doesn’t know it. Hiding in plain sight. Double dating. A means to my end. The boy is part of my pretense. Liquor loosens ties, heels discarded, Bruce urging Rosalita “to jump a little higher, Senorita come sit by my fire.” The cover of the party. The couples – all the men. No one knows my motives. The ruse pays off – the moment I lean in, wisps of her hair brushing my face, inhaling her perfume – her scent – to whisper – to be near – my lips almost touching her skin – some silly joke about that girl over there. She laughs, turns to me, smiles, asks me to light her cigarette.

III.

Lessons Learned

Waiting for a date at this restaurant:
white table cloths, fine silver, cut
crystal, black jacketed waiters,
women in silk stockings, coifed hair,
dangling earrings, heels with an open toe
always remind me of Mother.

I remember that special dinner with her long ago,
that night – she and I – in our finest,
small awed girl, the daughter.
She reminded me of Marilyn Monroe,
the way she walked into the room and men's
heads swiveled, words paused, phrases
left hanging – time slowing almost still
until they took her measure – then the room's
rhythm returned, conversations murmured.

Vodka martini, straight up
with a twist, the waiter took
her order bowing, obsequious –
I, minding my manners,
sitting up straight,
smoothing my dress,
crossing my legs,
checking my hair,
licking my lips;
keeping my voice low,
knowing my seafood fork
from my salad fork
spooning my soup towards the North.

I'm lost in reverie when my date
startles me when she takes a seat
beside me, inquires how I'm feeling.
It's easy enough to answer:
vodka martini straight up with a twist

Mornings NYC

Morning commuters, shoulder
to shoulder, cloth a film between
flesh on their underground commute,
each lost in thoughts belonging
to one else. We sway as one as
the train screeches into a curve,

dark – light – dark – light
stations fly by, apertures
open and close – a slide
show of smeared color,
impressionistic blurred faces,
forward motion – flickering

fluorescents. Time pushes the train along
with us, air pressed ahead
denser and denser into the
tunnel until – doors fly open
to chiming bells and we're off
like horses at Belmont, sluicing

salmon driven to spawn,
a silent horde of workers
climbing stairs – breaking through
to bright sunlight and fresh air;
each of us driven towards
our individual seas.

You Are Here

No one said a word. We all knew what the ashes held. He stood silently, briefcase in hand, riding the apartment's elevator, right next to me, covered in grey from head to toe. No one said a word. My friend's eyes wide with fear, tears streaming down her face, repeating "bodies deflate when they hit the ground. I had the old woman by the hand and then the next I knew she was gone. A girl in a khaki suit just hit the ground." We were stunned into silence. The normal sounds of the city – gone – instead a sonic boom from a giant, sci-fi stealth fighter zooming low over-head, the whupping thump of helicopter blades, every kind of siren and alarm ringing in our ears – nowhere to go, nowhere to turn – you are here.

Coffee and a Bagel

The first pause of every day,
that routine moment in time,
you know me by my order:
toasted bagel, cinnamon raisin
black coffee; we laugh about
working women where we
meet on common ground
before the escalators consume me
and I'm on my way up
leaving you down below.

The day of the planes
I was not there. The day
the flaming jet fuel fell
to earth. But you were.
You stood there long before dawn,
before that moment the world
stood still, baking our bagels,
brewing our coffee, tucking a
dark strand of hair into your scarf,
putting cash in your till
getting ready for the day.

What was your name?

Choice

Options are exercises
in selection.

What is not chosen
slices bits
away from my core

lying at our feet
like the rug
we now stand on
you choose
what parts of me
fit your plan.

Res ipsa loquitor
the thing speaks for itself.

Res judicata
the choices are final.

On a Day in 1918

to young Tom Parker

You never talked about
it – the war to end all wars,

the one you came back from,
a twenty-year old man.
You came home from
France and they didn't,
the folly of politics

sat like a pit
in your stomach.

That's why you
hated FDR
when I never heard
you speak of hate before.
Because no matter

how much idealism,
ideology and politics

we speak, the young doughboys
lay where your hands last
left them. You knew the price
of war, of being reckless and brave.

The Bulldog

Bill lying dead
in a drawer
in the morgue
each eye
open to a different distance.

I loved your bulldog
kept him for you
when you went in
went in never
to come out again.

Big old bulldog
terrified and shivering
by thunder's sound
and smattering rain
against my casement window
in my apartment where

I held him close to me
he held me close to him

Both of us looking for your scent.

Sally Yates Summoned to Congress

The white guys in ties
demand you
testify, create
a spectacle
meant to embarrass you.
It's like school
gym, dodgeball
or death, they think
the rulers win.

Their volleys zip
by—but the white
guys in ties
miss every time.

Brilliant, exquisitely
prepared poised,
never rattled
by the rounds
of pointed fingers,
you make them
appear like little
boys playing with toys.

their words thump
to the floor
like impotent rubber.

Qu'est-ce que c'est que ça

In a café, a long time ago, in the fourth
arrondissement deep in the night in Paris,

my older friend ordered in French.

I was so impressed, until instead of *crème brûlée*
they put before her *île flottante*
and we laughed until the room seem to spin

with too much wine? Or was it champagne?
or being away from school in humdrum London
(who needs heat in the summer)?
Or was it the way the lights dazzled in the mirrors,
 or how cigarettes burned so much slower?
 The table cloths seemed so much whiter.

I told you:

You have to go to Paris — you're so young and a poet!

You lowered your eyes,
as if watching something slip
silently from your grasp
and in a whisper:
"Paris is too dangerous."

Oh...

Right, I said. That was then

Squirrel Man (*Staples Office Supply, Nacogdoches, Texas*)

The man appeared talking fast – close to my face – I could barely hear and then I did | 9/11 commemoration; his teeth were a chipmunk’s clattering up and down | he didn’t breathe between words | “we have a man,” he said “survived both attacks” he said | I said “Shut up” | but his mouth – chitter chatter – nitter natter, his sounds punching out, pushing me, encircling me | 9/11 commemoration | “we don’t expect a dime, it’s your presence, that’s important at the 9/11 memorial.” | “Get out of my face, get out of my face, I was there for both.” | He blathered on “then perhaps you’d like to speak?” | “For the last fucking time get the fuck out of my face,” peddle your wares on the graves of someone else’s dead. | I’m sorry” he said, “for all your stress.”

Sixth Street Firehouse

Snow falling outside
tall narrow windows
poets talk
poets read in
this old fire station
where bells no
longer clang
waking men
to urgent action
the only sound
echoing now
are poets' voices
softly urging
a different
call to war

IV.

Darkness

My hand
pressing across my eyes
heel firmly on the right
fingers gripping the left
simulating infinite darkness.

Insulated.

Resting my chin
in the heels of my hands
pressing my fingers
softly over my eyes
to the same effect.

Disguise.

It's been a while
since I considered suicide
staring into artificial darkness
sea of nothing
my own creation
my dark unlit place
my secret.

Sterilized.

Bloody Woods

The woods are greedy,
a jealous suffocating mistress,

thorns tearing flesh, drawing
blood, intricate sticky

spider webs of confusion,
stopping me in my tracks

until I pick away the delicate
webbing, tangling my hair,

clinging to my clothes. I trudge
through tall weeds, thick

mud pulling at my boots, brambles
and briars clutching at my jeans

tearing my skin, no easy way out,
a drop of blood carves a trail

through sweat on my forearm
like love lost – I fought

through thickets, to find a path
in, around or under my love

for you, poison thorns and all,
stumbling through a maze

looking for the shafts
of sunlight in the dark woods

a clearing to find my breath,
rest my bones, and plan my escape.

Mourning News

Upon awakening
steam wafting up

from my coffee cup,
nestled in my hands

and ancient limestone hills
draped in ageless live oak

rise in the distance before me.

The ringing phone
whose voice I can't remember

telling me you are no longer
standing there against them

starting from mere moments ago,
All this ringing wringing

from this voice I can't remember
bringing this news

and all I can think about is the fact
that I have to wash my hair

that I must get all the dirt out.

Summer, In Time

my bare feet dangling from
the tailgate of my grandfather's truck
as we drove over a wooden bridge
hopping a clear narrow creek.

Put-putting along a white, sandy road,
driving on paths carved through
a forest that never let us forget
who was boss; the summer sun dared
only drop its spots as the trees allowed.

I rested my head in the bed of the truck
and I gazed up into bits of sky dancing
in the canopy and I knew the freedom
birds felt once they were caught up
in flight. Grabbing the tailgate's chain

to brace myself, I turned my head round
as far as it would go, and when the shadows
erased the glare from the glass in the rear
of the cab, I saw your head there, saw
the crease on the back of your cocked hat,

your pipe stuck like a shadow from your mouth
as your hand moved the stick, changing
gears. You plucked me from the truck's
bed, carrying me gently on your hip; I felt
your quiet strength, tried to memorize

the scratch of your five o'clock shadow, the smell
of pipe tobacco mixed with your salty sweat
as you set me down to run among the trees
while you worked those woods, growing
pines that would pay for my future-

that future I was living when the phone call
came telling me you were gone. It was impossible
to come home. Sitting cross-legged
on the floor of my empty apartment
in D.C., moving trucks gunning their
engines on their way north
to New York City, I cradled the phone to my ear,
my mouth a small, silent "o," fear rising
and holding me still. That night, in the hotel,
on my way to accomplishment, I dreamed
we walked in the sun-filled piney woods:

I could feel the sun's heat on my arms, smell
your salty sweat, feel the brush of your denim
overalls, see the pipe in your mouth. I scampered,
as I always did, to keep pace. "But Pop,"
I begged, "I want to stay with you."

You paused mid-stride and smiled down
at me, as you always had, and cupped
my small blond head in your hands.
I knew what you would say, like you always said
"No, hon... not now."

Air

heavier than gravity
pinning me here

my right side twisted
and torn up

in an old metal bucket
of rust meant to last longer
than the day before us

but it won't
nothing does

Planks

I built your coffin
with seventy-five
year old pine planks
my grandfather used

to build his house.
I painted it white
like his house, taking
care with each detail,

thunder rumbles above
a darkening sky, but
no rain, no relief
– just unrelenting heat.

Earth, Ashes, Dust

for Jamie Payne

Funerals are on Sunday in East Texas.
I drove by the place the men made for you.

Men busy digging up the earth,
shovels carving through dirt,

sweat sticking shirts to backs, a mound
of clotted, speckled moist soil piles

up. Women make our beds
all our lives until the end

when men tuck us in.

Super Loblolly

Chip-n-saw or old growth pine
are best, avoid the cat's eye
or trees whose trunks have split

in two, take the skinny pines
we'll use them for pulp,
leave the hardwoods

because they produce nuts for
the deer hunted in the fall.
One over the other,

choices we make daily,
genetically engineered seeds
produce the perfect tree

straight and tall, no defects
or quirks, man replaces
nature's diversity with perfection.

With Movement, Rest

I love the guys with their track hoes and skidders, their bulldozers and shearers, they move a forest from one place to another on the back of that one big truck. *Magicians*. They move the woods a tree at a time ferrying it from its beginning to end down to the lumber mill transformed into buildings, bridges, tunnels and shelter. Giants; they move mountains of earth, pushing and carving the land, ruling the dirt beholden to their desires. They burn the land restoring its fertility with their tractors pulling discers, draggers and seed hoppers, creating oceans of green rolling gently in waves coaxed by Southern breezes. Like water finding its true level, my soul is most comfortable with them, their missing digits, beat up hats, calloused weathered hands and faces; battle scarred from renewing the earth. I love that with them I feel humble and plain and rooted.

The Old Church

In my House
you don't need
to look for a
stud to hang

your picture,
mow your lawn,
stop that fixture
leaking. In my

House you don't
need to look
for studs; they
abound in ship-

lapped walls.
In my House,
male and female
connectors feed

electricity from
proper ends to
willing receptacles.
In my House,

you don't need to
look for a stud, or
an electrician or
a plumber. My

House is built
true and plumb,
and strong. In my
House, there isn't
a need for you at all.

Per Stirpes

By the roots spreading fingers
 through past
present, future intentions
a never ending
 division of ancient
love – by roots

of relation, by blood,

intention thrust
into the vagaries of time
handed down from generation
 to generation,
unknown to each
 other, ancient
 love descending
from those whose desires are directed
by language and law

and uncertainty and death.

Nannie's Camelia Bush

You are dressed
in your Sunday best –
pink dress, mink stole
draped across your shoulders.

You squint
into the sun, your shadow
thrown against the white
frame house.

One lithe arm reaches
fingertips gently touching
the delicate leaves
of the young Camelia.
Pride washes across
your face all those years ago

all those years ago
all those years ago

but here you are
in the yellow-edged photograph

blooming again.

Fall

breaches summer's
edge, blending seasons,

stands of French
mulberry bushes

sprout fat bunches
of luscious purple

berries, telling me
it's time, brown

top millet once green
now limp and dry

needs mowing
to release its seeds

before rains arrive—
a doe bolts across

the road running
scared from the

rutting stags
driven to plant

their seeds fathering
a new generation, white

oak, hickory and ash
drop their nuts

on wet fertile
dirt piled with nature's

mulch, twigs, leaves,
decomposing earth.

Minuet

Minute differences never
stopped me for a minute
from believing that
I am the lesser
being on this blue green
planet lumbering around
the sun that is a star
with the orb
that is the moon
holding all of us in place
with a tensile string
of gravity, that may
one day - break.
don't you see?
when the wind
strums music from
the needles of a pine tree
they whisper the melody
composed by the spinning
of the earth
and the hands
of the moon
like some ancient harp
that has nothing
whatsoever to do
with the minute beings
living on this planet
minute to minute

VITA

Lisa Louise Fountain was born in Corpus Christi, Texas on November 12, 1956. She graduated from New Braunfels High School in New Braunfels, Texas in May of 1974. From there she earned her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Texas in 1979. After graduating college, she obtained her Juris Doctor, cum laude, from Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana and earned one more law degree, a LL.M., from Columbia Law School in New York City in 1989. Ms. Fountain practiced primarily corporate litigation until retiring from law in about 2009. She then decided to continue her education and earned her Master of Arts with a concentration in Poetry from Stephen F. Austin State University in December 2017. In addition to her degree, she also worked as a Graduate Teaching Assistant and Graduate Teaching Fellow in English.

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