

## Waves

*by Pamela Waterbury*

Long after the car disappeared,  
I still waved goodbye to her  
as my grandmother waved off my mother,  
and my mother me,  
each of us leaving for another world.

Once my daughter's hand held in mine,  
we waved "bye-bye" to her grandmother.  
With those leavings came returns,  
like waves on Lake Michigan's shoreline  
until the final no return  
of her grandmother's life.

On summer days, my daughter followed the waves,  
out and back to shore on sturdy legs.  
Water tumbled grainy sand  
and quartz against her ankles  
while riptide currents lurked just beneath.

At the grade school, I stood watching  
her disappear behind heavy doors.  
On the surface she floated back, but already  
the current tugged her into deeper water.

Now she carries her belongings  
to a new room, a new life,  
on a distant shore,  
our visits ending with my hand raised  
to her receding form.

Watching the stillness of frozen water  
bent and peaked on the lake  
in this gray February cold,  
I imagine the currents underneath,  
the thaw, and once again waves  
against the shore.

## Running in Montpelier:

### Winter

*by Pamela Waterbury*

Like a widow layered in black, weighted,  
under hat and mittens, disguised and hidden, she  
runs into this snow world. Prepared for hills, but  
not this storm. Not the below zero  
air harsh in her lungs. Not this danger lurking  
under each safe-seeming surface.  
Constant surveillance for bumpy ground,  
slick packed-snow, and black ice patches  
exhaust her.

In the city, the murky slush  
slows her pace; the stop-start  
of dodging a woman lugging groceries,  
a stalled truck makes her feel the dampness from  
neck to toe. Not the freeing summer wetness from  
even pacing, long strides—  
vigilance earns this sweat.  
Like a burka, her tightly wrapped scarf  
conceals her from strangers' stares.

No digressions on these runs, predictable  
patterns. The exterior world a blur,  
only feet lifting and lowering and breath.  
Heavy clothes sealing off the cold  
weight her body  
as she ascends the hill,  
feet allowing only brief spurts of runs.  
Her mind focuses on the in and out breath—  
pants of labor.

No triumph of a quick spurt ends the run,  
only the plodding of one step and the next  
brings her to the top of the hill. Pulling off the veil  
of her hood she looks back at the frozen world. In  
her room, clothes shed,  
she's momentarily lightened, returned

## Grandmother's Hands

by Pamela Waterbury

As teens my hands slept  
slathered in Vaseline and white gloves.  
I wanted them lacey to utter  
like a light breeze through aspen leaves;  
hands elegant among the china she gave me;  
delicately fingering facets on cut glass bowls; or  
a lover's sinewed back

not these competent hands, gifts  
from my Germanic grandmother,  
tarnished with wrinkles, prominent blue veins,  
arthritic angles and bumps,  
square-shaped with stubby fingers fanning  
off a broad palm.

Forgetting gloves, they  
scrub kitchen floors, scrape crusted food  
off pans, twist stubborn lids,  
dig in garden dirt rooting out weeds.  
They leave trails of pencil conversations  
on student papers, knit a daughter's scarf  
for years at a time.

Nails never perfectly groomed,  
reveal the white ridges of my grandmother's.  
Each day I watch for the familia tremors—  
legacies she gave to my mother, a shaking  
that kept her from her paints—  
to overtake my hands as they lift  
a coffee mug or put down the first line of a poem.

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