

Sowing the Seeds

JANET PROULX

Grandfather would sit in a rocker by the window
smoking a pipe and gazing upon his bountiful garden
snuggled up against a machine shop.

Grandmother raised 12 children,
scrubbed the floors until the shine was gone.

Iron twin beds in opposite corners, a crucifix
Jesus bleeding from a crown of thorns.
She sat in the rocker and prayed
rosary beads inching forward like each predictable day
blessed is the fruit of thy womb, she'd whisper.

What Grandfather harvested
Grandmother canned in her tiny kitchen
glass jars boiling on the stove.
Even in summer she'd bake from scratch
jelly rolls dusted with powdered sugar.

Perched near the window I watched and listened,
we rarely talked though she spoke volumes
as she plied dough, beat batter,
flattened piecrusts with a heavy rolling pin
turned-down stockings her concession to comfort.

Exhausted by all of Grandfather's planting,
the ambulance came one afternoon
and I never saw her again.