

B. Lynne Zika

Mimorian

It's a relief to forget some things,
but I forget names, conversations,
the ten most important doomaflitchies
in the history of some thingamajig
which I'm supposed to recall.
I've been accused of being lazy
for failing to glue those nodules
into my brain cells, as if I'd choose
to think with a limp. Each year I listened

to the teacher say, "We have
a new girl in class," and all those eyes
would turn on me.
What was it in those first few beats
that made them decide whether I'd be
let in? In every town,
year after year, I moved with the same name,
the same blonde ponytail—short or long—
the same ungraspable lottery
which makes one face turn away
and another one smile.
You can imagine after 25 schools,
the names won't stick, no matter
how many times you say, over and over,
That one's Mary and that one's Jean.

Once it becomes a blur,
there's nothing you can do but watch
highways scatter behind you, knowing
you've forgotten another town,
another face.
Now whenever I meet someone
in a body, on a page,
I only remember spider threads.
I feel them shooting from a head or a mouth
or a heart and landing on my chest.
Your words, your name,
that question you just asked me
which I didn't hear—
Each of these spins a silk cord from you
to me, and I stretch my foot
to the edge, slide myself to the middle

of the tightrope, with no hands, no memory,
and only my uncertain feet to tell me
who will eat and who will die.

B. Lynne Zika 's work has appeared in numerous online and print publications, including *The Somerville Times*, *Boston Area Small Press and Poetry Scene*, *globalpoemic*, *Poetry East* and *Writing in a Woman's Voice*. In addition to editing poetry and nonfiction, she worked as a closed-captioning editor for the deaf and hard-of-hearing. She received a Pacificus Foundation Literary Award in short fiction. Her photography has received several awards, including the 2020 Top Creator Award from *Viewbug*. Images may be viewed at <https://artsawry.com/> .