

Kay Bosgraaf

Harbinger

Huddling at Annie's bedroom door,
my sister and I listen to her sob.
She never before wailed this long
at afternoon nap time when she snuggles
with her tiny teddy bear—but this time
Teddy is gone. Two-year-old Annie
grieves by herself. We are not allowed
to comfort her. Mom told us Dad
snatched Teddy away from her. Annie
clings to Teddy much of every day
and never falls asleep without him.
We find Mom and beg her to give Teddy
back, but our tearful plea does not move her.
Mom says *Dad dumped Teddy into the trash
barrel out by the barn and set it on fire.
Teddy is gone.*
Our hopes shrivel as we crumple
next to each other on the living room carpet
listening to Annie cry.

Farmgirl Makes Her Way

I leave my house on a chilly April morning and enter
the greenhouse, warm with the sun breaking

through the glass and with the aroma of moist earth
and green celery seedlings, a scent as welcoming

as walking into a house with the music of baking bread.
Moving slowly back and forth, Grandpa waters a bed

in one area, and Angel my old Mexican friend at another
holds a handful of seedlings, grasps his wire

and presses the roots of one seedling at a time into the black
soil, his touch as gentle as if he were handling a baby.

Grandpa looks up and hollers, *Children do not belong
in here.* Frightened, I move along to the dark deserted

barn, pull its large door closed to mount my stilts, and stalk
high above the driveway when a semi truck, like a huge

snorting bull, backs down from the road towards me to load
celery from the cold storage. Scared, I jump off my stilts

to run to the house where my chores wait, so instead I start
walking to my green hills beyond the house and farm

for the first time since winter. I step along the road
between the ditches edging the fields to the elm and oak

covered slopes where a flourish of buttercups and violets bloom
and ancient cow paths smooth the way for me to keep going.

Kay Bosgraaf was raised in western Michigan and now lives in Durham, North Carolina, with her husband Richard. She has a Ph.D. from The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and her teaching includes some years at Michigan State University, seven years at Lincoln Memorial University, and her longest tenure at Montgomery College in Rockville, Maryland, where she is Professor Emerita. Her poetry books include *The Fence Lesson* (Kelsay Books 2019) and *Song of Serenity* (Northwoods Press 2005) plus a chapbook *Blue Eyes and Homburg Hats* (Presa Press 2018). Her poems have appeared in a variety of literary magazines including *The Baltimore Review*, *The Maryland Poetry Review*, *Phoebe*, *The Halcyone Literary Review*, and many others plus are forthcoming in *The Main Street Rag*, *Carolina Muse*, and *Crosswinds*. She was the recipient of a residency at MacDowell Colony and two residencies at Vermont Studio Center.