

bg Thurston



Feature

Lineage

Seeking the genealogy of this house and land
is like piecing a spirit quilt together—
The same names repeat every generation:
Caleb, Sarah, Richard, Hannah, William, and Mary.
Their children appear and disappear suddenly—
Lung Fever, Croup, Bornstill, oftentimes
taking their mother with them into the grave.
Reading elegant script belies the somber tone
of each recorded event. Bewildered, I stand
under the evening sky and question what I have
in common with the women who have lived
on this acreage. I lift my head when I hear
them whisper in a sky bright with stars—
the unchanging patterns all of us share.

Caleb Weeks, 1805

A good day was an acre plowed
to plant potatoes and field corn,
then lifting the harness and traces
from the sorrel horse, leading him
back to the dark barn, as swallows
settled down in their hidden nests
on the rafters above. One tin scoop
of oats and several fat forkfuls
of hay pitched from high in the mow,
the summer smells of timothy grass
mixing with sweat and manure.

He pauses to lean against the door
and watch another evening descend,
takes a swig of cider from the flask
tucked behind the slatted feed bin.
For him, there is no better chapel
than these weathered wooden walls,
listening to the contented chorus
of chewing from the animals he loves.
There is a sweetness to this place
along with all the work and worry.
He bows his head to ask for sons.

Everlings

Wonder how we can be
content beneath these posts
and beams, insulated from
the world outside.
Shed snake skins and rodent
skeletons fill the crevices
in lathe and plaster walls

where the laughter of ladies
titters amongst the rooms
covered with cabbage roses
and soot. Outside the moon
fills with light, illuminating
the night where owls blink
and hoots are given back
to the lone coyote bark.

Speakeasy, 1935

You arrive in darkness
but it is a calm twilight.
Circumstance has drawn you

down our unlit hallways.
Feel your way along the paper
clinging to the stairwells.

In this place, truth and lies
wear the same clothing.
If no one understands,

you are welcome to stay.
Secrets are safe with us;
nothing said here leaves

though we may whisper
your sorrow within our walls.
Drink this, fill your gullet

with amber courage.
Follow us into rooms
that will grow dim with sin.

The night will hold you here.
Remain until you wake,
then return into the white light

where morning's naked eye
will shine upon you once more.

The Ghost

I have not left the world
It was poetry who abandoned me
 Or so I believed
Now when I hold my hands over my ears
I see the echo from the sparrow's throat
And when I close my eyes tight
I smell the color of blood and rust
Holding my palm over my heart
 I feel nothing
As words continue falling all around my feet.

After a career in high-tech, **bg Thurston** now lives on a farm in Warwick, Massachusetts. In 2002, she received an MFA in Poetry from Vermont College. She has taught poetry at Lasalle College, online at Vermont College, and currently teaches poetry workshops. Her first book, *Saving the Lamb*, by Finishing Line Press was a Massachusetts Book Awards highly recommended reading choice. Her second book, *Nightwalking*, was released in 2011 by Haleys. This year, she has finished the manuscript for her third book about the history of her 1770's farmhouse titled *From Cathouse Farm*.