

WE BURIED A CAT TODAY

Fall 2016, Uncategorized

Elizabeth Trach

We buried a cat today.



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We brought him home from the neighbor’s yard, where we found him stiff and cold, paws unnaturally curled and raised as if to fend something off. His teeth were bared a bit, but his eyes were closed.

A snow shovel wasn’t bier enough for what was so recently a purring, warm thing, so I brought up from the basement a cloth,

a green curtain that I had sewed long ago and which had once hung in the dining room of the Red House, where we fed babies with plastic spoons and marked time with small colored candles in cakes.

Now that’s buried too, wrapped around the cat whose body suddenly made sense again as we rolled him over and he looked like he was sleeping.

“He doesn’t look scared any more,” said the boy as we tucked in his friend and carried his body to the hill behind the fence,

stirring up papery orange leaves as we went.

We scooped fistfuls of light, silty soil over the bundle, and I felt how soft the dust was, falling through my fingertips,

while the girl whittled a stick with gritted teeth, scraping away the bark in short, sharp strokes.

She would not let me touch her.

As the boy and his father gathered stones to mark the spot, she broke the silence with a snap and plunged the stick into the earth above the grave

and walked away

past the silent beehive, so lately humming with purpose and now empty, a Roanoke of wax and honey abandoned and left for us to interpret as we will

We buried the cat at dusk,

and as I closed the gate behind me my eyes were already adjusting to the dark.

*Elizabeth Trach is a writer and editor living in Newburyport, MA. She earned her M.A. in Creative Writing at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. She also sings in a band, grows almost all her own food, and occasionally even cooks it. You can catch up on all her adventures in extreme gardening at*

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October 14, 2016 · wojo · Tagged Poetry