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Age: 17, Grade: 12

School Name: Interlochen Arts Academy, Interlochen, MI

Educator: Brittany Cavallaro

Category: Poetry

HOME: A GLOSSARY

A

AFTERMATH

Our grandmother told us how the dress
burned. We sat on the floor in the pseudo-
kitchen, watching her smash tomatoes

with her hands. "What about the veil?"

you wanted to know. She pressed
her fingers into the bowl, one by one.
"Singed."

ALTERNATE

While the house got rebuilt, we lived
in an empty parsonage. You were there
first, late May after school ended. I came

later, hearing stories of how the garage

was trying to swallow you whole. The construction
crew spent their days on the doorstep,
eating Wonder Bread and walking back and forth

between the houses to ask about bathroom tiles.

AMPERSAND

You always thought that they looked like mothers.

ANTISEPTIC

It was summer. We screamed.

APRICOT

For my birthday, you were so excited. I stood
in the pseudo-bathroom with my eyes closed,
waiting for a surprise. Head in the shower,

you never came back. I ended up soaked.

That night, before we got into our shared bed,
I let you try again. I was allowed to peek
this time. You put something green and wet

into my palm, smiling like it had just been pulled

from its mother. Lucky bamboo, you called it. No instructions. I let it die for a few months after that, just to get back at you. Once I could no longer tape

the leaves back on, I looked up plant care. In the end, all I could find was a video titled, "help! my apricot trees are BURNING in the

sun!" Our bamboo disintegrated three weeks later.

B

BALCONY

We pushed our mattress through the window one afternoon. You suggested it first, said you'd always wanted to jump. That was the summer

I pretended I was an extension of your body. We linked pinkies,

making plans to avoid the adirondack chairs on the ground below. Your brother was the one who told on us. No six-year-old casually walks outside carrying a fitted sheet.

BEE

I was there when you got stung for the first time. We laid next to a rusted swing set and sang church hymns as if someone was going to come and save us.

BLESSING

At our grandmother's church, they let us drink wine. We copied your mother, who took big gulps and saved some in her cheeks for later.

BOLTED

in. Even the locks on the doors melted.

BULLFIGHT

On the pseudo-television we had to change the channel with pliers. The days that we couldn't be bothered, there were bullfights in the background.

P

PARLOR

of ice cream, that is. In the women's bathroom you told me that you were bleeding and then you put your hand between your legs.

PICK

-up truck news. We heard one of the construction workers talking about how the new Ford on page seven was winking at him. You wanted to be on a page,

winking at everyone who walked by in July.

T

TEMPORARY

is what you called their house (after the fire). We sat at the window, watching for our mothers.