

Grandma Jane
-Cherise Oakley

As children, our yard connected to Grandma's
by a roughly mown path.
We would sprint toward her sprawling farm house
avoiding the deadly pricklers and ground bees,
past the weeping willow,
but not before we swung on loose branches,
like Sunday morning Tarzan, back to Jane.
Plain Jane, her home, our haven,
summer cousins, intoxicated laughter,
cheap steaks on a charcoal grill.
Our kind doesn't use A1.
Sweet corn steaming in a buttered painters tray,
Cherry pit spitting contests:
Watch for worms!
Deep end tests and diving competitions,
blue lips and chlorinated rainbows speaking in the darkness.
Egg toss catastrophes, peanut hunting triumphs!
Kegeators, lemonade pitchers, and the Wild Turkey tucked deep.
Bocce and Billiards:
Watch the felt and chalk the cue!
Amazing Jane, the hostess who fretted and fawned,
saving tea bags on the discarded soap dish,
planting petunias in the stone foundation of a burned out silo.
Salt shakers laced with white rice,
coffee grounds percolated twice for good measure,
hospital corners and white glove tests.
"Be present at our table Lord,
be here and everywhere adored..."
Great Depression left overs like
catsup topped meatloaf stretched
thick with Quaker Oats.
God bless Jane.