

Jasmine

In the garden at dusk,
the fragrance is heady,
familiar, known, but not
known to me,
 until someone says,
jasmine--jasmine, imagine.
I had known jasmine from a hundred
readings, a word in a book. I had
smelled jasmine in a myriad places.

Not knowing was like
 being ignorant,
 oblivious.

Now, knowing--a light going on.
If I had only known; what if
I had known the name,
 brought the two
together. I, too, have felt neither here
nor there, unnamed, unrecognized,
sensing only in-between things,
which like my jasmine with its name,
struggle to come together.

Pyrrhic Victories: Memoir of a Southern Belle

Everyone said I lived a charmed life
Shirley Temple curls and pinafores
Queen of the Yambilee runner-up
for Miss Louisiana running away

from Mama's green switch at sixteen
Edward and the white columned house
on Laurel with the golden Collie
on the front porch all those babies
and cloth diapers and nigra nannies
and Edward dead of carbon monoxide
poisoning in the white Cadillac
in our garage Peggy to the doctor
in Jackson Lily to the shop-keeper
in Mobile Martin climbing telephone
poles for Ma Bell and the sad-faced
boy named for his father snatching
defeat from the jaws of victory no
mother should have to bury a son

the jobs--I was meant to be a wife--
the jobs in nursing homes wiping
old-lady behinds then house mother
to gaggles of whining sorority girls
finally saved by the rich old man
who mounted me once a week until
I ran away from him too looks like
I live a charmed life just won--at 95--
the beauty contest at the old-folks home.

Who's Counting

I played hundreds of games
to teach you, my precocious 3-year-old,
who could almost read, how to count.

How hard could it be—as simple as 1-2-3.

Too soon, I realized, counting was out,
but ever determined, I knew

you could make it to 3.

We waltzed—you know, 1-2-3; you cried;
we sang “1-2-3, kiss my knee”; I cried;

we—I—counted: oranges, peanuts,
acorns, cars passing on the highway,
chocolate chips falling into the cookie dough,

pennies. We both cried. At last, we quit,
and on some immemorial day,
you counted to a hundred. And now,

you have a PhD—in reading.



Cordelia Hanemann is currently a practicing writer and artist in Raleigh, NC. She has published in numerous journals, including *Turtle Island Quarterly*, *Connecticut River Review*, *Glassworks Magazine*, and *Laurel Review*; anthologies, *The Well-Versed Reader*, *Heron Clan IV* and *Kakalak 2018* and in her own chapbook, *Through a Glass Darkly*. Her poem, photo-op, was a finalist in the *Poems of Resistance* competition at *Sable Press*. Recently, she was featured poet for *Negative Capability Press* and *The Alexandria Quarterly*, she is now working on a first novel, about her roots in Cajun Louisiana.

The Pangolin Review; Issue 8, January 8, 2019

