

## Charlotte Hamrick

### The Quiet Hours

In the quiet hours I wander  
around the garden while the dogs  
stretch their sleep-laden legs,  
bouncing through ferns and magnolia  
leaves, chasing the cats up  
the japonica tree as I fill the bird feeder  
and hose off the patio.

In the quiet hours I perform  
my morning ritual of measuring  
coffee and tamping it down  
in the bowl, pouring water  
into the well, turning the knob,  
waiting for the steam.

In the quiet hours I read, write,  
contemplate. I watch the weather  
report on TV. I think about what I'll do  
this day.

Today I thought about the quiet hours  
I spent with you, waking up to the low  
murmur of your voice and his, coffee cups  
clinking and the smell of frying bacon.  
I would snuggle down in the covers, listening,  
feeling safe, content, peaceful. I'd feel  
grateful that we'd finally come to this place  
in our lives where we were happy  
with each other.  
I often think of those mornings,  
peace spreading in my chest like a balm.

**Charlotte Hamrick's** poetry, prose, and photography has been published in *The Rumpus*, *Blue Fifth Review*, *Barren Magazine*, *Eunoia Review*, and numerous other journals. She is a Pushcart Prize nominee and was a finalist for the 15th Glass Woman Prize for her Creative Non-Fiction. She is a Contributing Editor for *MockingHeart Review* and *Barren Magazine*. She lives in New Orleans with her husband and a menagerie of rescued pets.