

Dana Robbins – Two Poems

Cello

It was taller than I and almost
as chubby. No wonder the other
children laughed at me as I lugged
the rented cello to school, dreamed

of poignant melodies it held in its
voluptuous curves. I put my arm
around its waist as if embracing
the woman I would become,

caressed the smooth maple of her
body but when I drew the bow
across her hollow she groaned
as if in pain.

No wonder, after only one week,
I gave up on the mournful depth
that could have been the song
of my lonely ten year old soul.

The Meter Reader

His pants ride high on his thin chest.
He has big sad eyes, wisps of white hair,
a Cheshire Cat smile, the stooped back
of the Jewish scholar. When I am five
he takes me for morning walks,
we talk, he listens to me; tenderly he takes
the measure of my soul.
Our words reach up to the clouds.
My grandfather is a poor man but this is his legacy
to me. His knobby fingers clutch my small
hand as if danger lurks behind the neat houses
of our New Jersey town. This is also his legacy.
He does not speak of the Cossack who attacked
his sister, how he fled from the Czar's army,
but a glimpse of the uniformed gas gage reader
sends the needle on his fear meter vibrating
in the highest register; his hand trembles
as we pass by.

Following a long career as a lawyer, **Dana Robbins** entered the University of Southern Maine Stonecoast Writers program from which she received an MFA in 2013. Her first book, *The Left Side of My Life*, was published by Moon Pie Press of Westbrook, Maine in 2015. Her poetry and essays have appeared in numerous journals and anthologies. Her poem, “To My Daughter Teaching Science,” was featured by Garrison Keillor on the *Writers Almanac*.