

Jennifer Hambrick – Two Poems

Our Father of the Airport

Atlanta Airport Gate A18
Thanksgiving travelers blur
through humid recycled air
huckster street calls
hawking airline credit cards.
I look up from an old John Grisham
and two rows over a father
holds a tiny boy on his lap.
The boy caws and squirms
pulls his father's jacket askew
love spills from round eyes
onto the child
beatific smile curving through
fatherly composure.

At home there's a box stuffed with
photos of my sister and me
our growing-up years –
the two of us with goats
at a petting zoo
our father off in the corner, smiling
the two of us in cone-shaped hats
birthday cake in foreground
our father beaming from afar
and our mother the photographer
out of the picture
no love for him.

O, young father, if you must
be father and mother both
rewrite the story's ending
paint a pietà of love, not death
you are the patron saint
of the never-loved
Father of the Airport

pray for us.

Privacy, Suburban Style

I'm not going to tell you
how I'll miss glancing out
from the hidden cover
of my kitchen window
as I make dinner
and seeing them
on their evening walks –
him striding calm and steadfast
responding now and then
to the chatter of this tiny daughter
as she skips and twirls
in Princess purple
unaware of any eyes upon her.
I won't reveal how my heart
uncurled like a spring hosta
to see this young man
lone rudder
of his motherless daughter's ship
guiding her course each night
along the neighborhood's
concrete way.
It would be inappropriate
to tell you what
his next-door neighbor said –

Alone. Struggling. Overdose.

There's still some laundry hanging
on the line behind his house.
I caught a glimpse of it through
the slats of the privacy fence,
had to look away.

Jennifer Hambrick's poetry has been honored with a Pushcart Prize nomination, and her chapbook, *Unscathed* (NightBallet Press), was nominated for the Ohioana Book Award. She won the Ohio Poetry Association's 2013 Ides of March contest, was a prizewinner in The Poetry Forum's 2011 William Redding Memorial Poetry Contest (Columbus), and has received many other recognitions for her work, which has been published in *Third Wednesday*, *Modern Haiku*, *Pudding Magazine*, *Barbaric Yawp*, *WestWard Quarterly*, *A Narrow Fellow*, *The Crisis Chronicles*, and elsewhere. Jennifer's poetry is forthcoming in many other journals and anthologies. A professional classical musician and public radio broadcaster, producer, and blogger, Jennifer Hambrick lives and works in Columbus, OH.