

## Lee Varon – Three Poems

### Vacation Photo

*for my father*

In the vacation photo you sit  
at the head of the table—  
tan, smiling—it is

just before your ten-year affair.  
We cluster around you  
your cufflinks clinquant in night's salt air.

We are about to devour crab cakes, red snapper.  
Mother's small teeth are pearls  
glistening beneath tear drop lights,

my two brothers, eager  
in madras sports jackets, smile  
just before your affair.

Could life have continued  
incandescent  
as the glow from your cigarette?

I'm hunched in red taffeta  
headed towards my nervous breakdown  
just before your affair

and mother seems unaware  
years of mysterious symptoms  
will leave her dead at forty-eight,

nor does my oldest brother  
sitting before baked potato aglow in tinfoil  
see cancer looming.

In the vacation photo the table gathers secrets  
splayed on pink linen.  
Forgiveness glitters along the hem.

## In Detox

You had a seizure last night  
broke your nose,  
stitches above black eyes.

Your eighth try.  
I send angels to your side.

On the cross-town train  
you blacked out  
before losing everything.

In San Diego  
the party stopped abruptly  
after your dreams flowed into icy water—

*Call 911* someone said,  
*No, stop.*

In Pacific Beach you wandered  
into waves, your glasses  
flowed away among surfers.

Jacaranda blooms  
stained sidewalks lavender;  
like your eyes bruised with pain.

At *World Curry* you fell  
on your face; sorrow  
escorted you home.

Ashes cast over Boston's  
skyline—did you come home  
to die?

Wherever you go—  
I never stop missing you.

## Letter To A Pedophile #20

I knew you before love left  
before they came to the house  
dragged you out  
head hitting concrete stairs  
head hitting that night  
I knew you before  
the long tongue of evil  
the long tongue licked the fur of your ear  
and said *Come*  
*This way*  
*I have something for you*  
You were a boy before love left  
and I knew you before  
the dandelions were blown  
When there was loving  
when there was loving and no evil  
Before you buried the 7-year-old  
with My Little Pony still  
clasped in her hand buried  
in a plastic bag  
where she poked holes to breathe and could not breathe  
And did not and did not and did not  
breathe  
And blood seeped out between her thighs  
and her father frantic searched  
the woods wondering where God was  
and God's eye blinked and God  
wasn't looking and  
I knew you before sex was an animal  
gnawing its way out of your body  
on a cold winter night not like the night  
you buried her  
bleeding bleeding

I knew you before love left  
When you were tall with hope  
young and tall  
with love and hope  
And I knew you  
before love left

**Lee Varon** is a social worker. Her poems have appeared in *Ibbetson Street*, *The Somerville Times*, *Bagels With The Bards*, and *Oddball*.