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Villanelle

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Gettysburg College
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Author Bio

Maria Southerton is a senior at Gettysburg, majoring in English and minoring in Secondary Education. After graduation, she plans to pursue a career as a high school English teacher, travel it up during her summers off, eat lots of great food, read and write to her heart's content and basically have a great life full of family and friends.

And over her father's shoulder, Amy looked at Agnes. The fear of expectation glittered in her mind's eye. Her parents were one thing, but her...

Great-Aunt Agnes raised her glass in silent toast, and Amy remembered that after all, she had been the white woman with the courage to marry a Chinese man, a very long time ago.

Amy closed her eyes and it was all peace, peace.

* * * * *

"I'll miss you."

"I'll miss you, too."

"Jenny, I don't know how to say it."

"Then don't."

"Then you can't, either."

"I won't."

* * * * *

As the plane began its ascent into the sky, Amy pressed a hand against the glass of her window. The sun beamed down and she felt as though she was going home, as though perhaps home and belonging were more states of mind than anything else.

"Jenny, Jenny," she sang under her breath, and closed her eyes.

FIN.

MARIA SOUTHERTON

Villanelle

The world is asleep, yet awake she remains,
Tossing and turning upon her bed,
Alone with her thoughts and the sounds of the trains.

Old conversations and occasional refrains
Of songs half forgotten clutter her head.
The world is asleep, yet awake she remains.

Now cruelly the mind cuts to lingering pains—
Loves that were lost and tears that were shed,
Alone with her thoughts and the sounds of the trains.

Remembering times marked with more losses than gains,

The lone whistle cries for things left unsaid,
The world is asleep, yet awake she remains.

"But life's like the moon as it waxes and wanes,
It keeps going 'round, so live 'til you're dead."
No need to be up with your thoughts and the trains.

And as these words resound, those crippling stains
Of regret leave her mind and to dreams she is led.
The world no longer sleeps while awake she remains,
Alone with her thoughts and the sounds of the trains.

ALISON MCCABE

A Case of Growing Up

I always preferred when it was just Mom and me for long car rides so I could sit in the front seat and pick the radio stations and rest my arm out the window. It was the way an air of contentment would fly in with the cross breeze and coast into our ears, our heads, our carefree contemplation, that I liked best. Mom was upset that Dad and Shawn had left for a cross country camping trip the week before and could not make it back for the day. I was pleased that it would only be me and Mom going.

This day I was especially excited because it would be my first time attending a funeral. I was still young, not so young, but young enough to have seen only life and no death. Yet at twelve years old, I knew enough to hide my enthusiasm with a solemn disposition because, naturally, funerals are understood to be mostly somber occasions. So as Mom ironed my black blouse in the other room, I stood in front of the mirror and practiced my mournful disguise. Lipstick would make my pout look fuller, but Mom had said I shouldn't rush those grown-up things. I figured today wasn't the day to bring up the makeup issue again, so I adjusted my lower lip to accentuate, but not overdo, the desired effect. I was a Hollywood star perfecting my funeral face for my next feature film before the limo arrived. The real life sorrow was all so glamorous. Death was the type of drama everyone would care about. At school all I would have to say was that my favorite aunt just died and they'd all talk about me and how sorry they felt and I would instantly be the topic of lunchtime conversation. I'd act a mess, and my day would drip with sweet sympathy. Maybe even the boys would give me hugs as I'd force a tear onto their bony little shoulders. Imagine that, me having actually found a way into their arms.

That morning, I focused most on Tommy Boyd. Tommy wore basketball shorts, a slightly oversized t-shirt, a baseball hat, but never a jacket to school each day, even in December. His hat covered his face from mid-nose up, so I hadn't seen his eyes, but I imagined that they were bright, blue, and dreamy. My friend Amy said