



Portfolio of Three Featured Poems

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Piece 1: “Ode to Youth”

Confidants, will you hear me this cold winter day?

For I am inspired

by a conversation with my grandmother
who yearned for youthful days.

Remember hundreds of miles of cycling
and celebrating life, liberty, freedom!

Enveloped in the kindness of her soul,
Grandma told me stories

of the Pacific Northwest, Midwest and South America!
and cycling adventures,

swimming across Lake Washington in her 70's
nature walking through the rainy winters of Seattle in her 80's.

Remembering a youth full of energy and promise,
nothing lasts forever,

even when she didn't take youth for granted, like
a blue jay flying against a now melancholy sky.

Is that you, Grandma?
Are you free to fly, cycle, explore?

Is that your wings soaring through indigo
skies that turn hostile quickly,

as our bodies turn and twist as
age creeps in and steals our energy?

You told me
in absolute terms

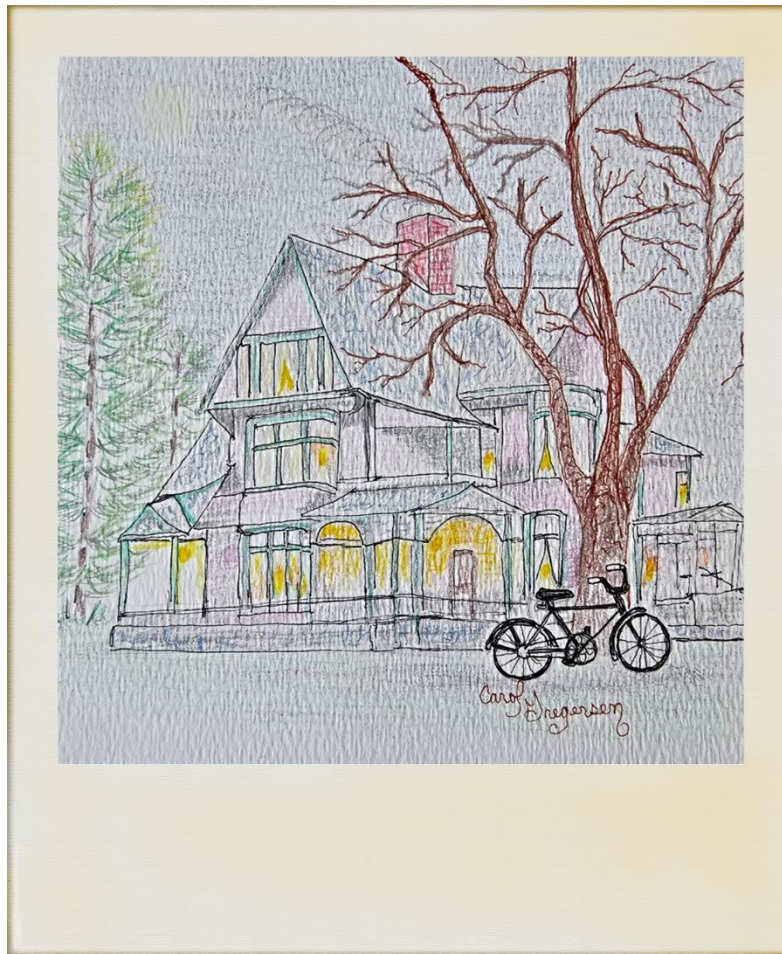
that if you couldn't take care of yourself
in your old age

you would do it—
you would take your own life.

And you did.

But you live on in me, the trees,
the mushrooms, the dogs that need a companion

and everything left behind by
you, wonderful athletic lady.



Piece 2: “An Ode to Grandma”
Illustration by Carol Gregersen

And thank you, Grandma. When last winter
we were mourning, warm breezes
and the cool summer night air

helped us embrace life and all its wonders.
The cerulean lake she entered
was cold and full of laughing children.

Their little fists full of sand and laughter
as loud as a Harley.

Her ears ringing not with delight but agony;

she needs peace and quiet
to think, mourn and reflect
into a magical being ready to create

on notebook paper and pen
beneath a hibernated lilac tree where
a few glacial lines are written:

melody; and after singing
 falling down on frigid cement
 everything is icy sunshine.



Piece 3: “Thank you, Grandma Doris”

Thank you to the little woman in a pink sweat suit
 for giving us her old red Toyota with a gray hood
 and the hundreds of pages of cycling memories,
 chronicling her trip to South America
 a celebration of the power of a woman’s body.

Thank you, God, for Granny.

Thank you, athletic lady.

Thank you to the piano— another Doris connection.

Thank you to the bicycle trip
 when you came to me in a dream
 at the Seattle to Portland ride
 encouraging me to finish.

All I wanted to do was jump off my bike
and go for a swim in the Willamette
but the water was filthy
where I and another cyclist almost collide from fatigue.

As I crawled back onto my bike,
you were there in spirit.

Thank you for saying it plain:

You can fucking do this.