**Basinette**

Mary’s not sure who’s pulling up her pants.

Stretch fabric snaps and she’s once more the charmed

diaspora sprout of a Roscommon

clan who converted spruce and fresh produce

into a deep-porched family seat that,

even sliced into apartments and in

need of paint, still wraps that wee rise grandly,

still owns a peek of ocean, though these days

you must climb to the third floor’s east gables.

Mary strolls boldly, solo, the half mile

of her clan’s claimed turf a mere drive from the

bobbing yacht protestant shores and genteel

shingle style pagan customs to the north.

Through radio chats and blackout curtains,

there goes Cassidy’s only granddaughter,

*(The Item* reports her 10th is graced by

the governor’s daughter; the girls are not

really friends, but clippings are pressed away)

past St. Ignatius for those Italians,

Our Lady of the Sea where Father drinks,

uphill on Oneida to the sweet fog

of mothballs and boiled supper dampening

stern Persian rugs that will not be replaced.

Feeble lace-strained rays give sober welcome

to the dynasty’s best final ember.

“Shower time, Mary,” that nice Irish girl

takes the *Christmas ’52* envelope,

collects black and whites of lawyers and girls

raising merry cocktails and cigarettes -

that’s Nancy, eyes closed mid-sip, tall Joe sleek

with St. Lo sector cool, one hand somewhere

behind Nancy, martini in his left.

“Some men were quite close with their assistants.”

Snaps of girls flush with husband-hunting mirth,

not for that pool much longer, cross fingers.

“Here’s Nita’s house.” Office girls formed in ranks,

High Life cans held aloft, a cook grilling

their luncheon on the sands of Singing Beach.

“Her father was very big in Boston.”

Mary makes quick account of her prospects,

sees her not-successful-son, her absent

husband, her beloved father looks on,

watches her own hands pat loose black pages

of scrap book on her shrunken legs, lifts the

relics away, chips of glued newsprint fall.

The nice Irish girl wheels her into her

office where it must be time to get back

to work, my that plastic chair is chilly,

the spray is nice and warm, the Irish girl

rubs her scalp, is telling her to lean back.

**Eastern White Pine**

In his empire building thirties, my dad

decided to establish a forest;

burlapped seedlings dripped into the back seat

of the lumpy two-stroke ’62 SAAB.

Our one acre sprawled just below Russel’s

fading dairy farm; two huge pines shaded

Indian paintbrush and frog-filled potholes.

Dad gridded the slope with a repurposed

bamboo slalom pole, its red flag removed-

Frost never used that breed of implement.

Our annual returns soon showed green flags

above the snarling meadow free-for-all,

though skidoos cropped what peeked above the snow.

When the sore-backed Ur-settlers tired of rock

picking and sought new Greeleylands, white pines

seized opportunity, jumping fey birch,

alders: succession, dainty classroom term.

Later, Russell’s preacher son harvested

a radio following; no haying,

milking, sugaring for that fine townsman.

Though Ike’s era favored scaling up, like

Keller leasing pasture all over town,

dispensing that one bottom acre of

his cornfield to my flatlander father,

himself just hanging on in these genteel

hills by instructing the imported crops

of skiing and tennis in their seasons,

would pay off Russel’s New Holland baler.

When our clan finally lost its toehold,

the local buyer knew the real cash crop:

that Worcester Range view across the valley.

Our scrub got brush-hogged lickety damned split,

not one pine processed into New England

Log Cabin, not one damned creosoted

half-log face like my folks’ budget castle.

These days I drive my cursor up and down

that stretch of statement houses where Tuscan

vines climb redwood pergolas and stone walls

are now neat and squared by Spanish hands, where

the road still bends, shaded by the same two

huge pines that dug in there ahead of us.