

Rebecca Woolsey

catch

seconds before growing up, i asked my father
to unearth his faded baseball glove from the
peeling basement trunk. he generally preferred
silvery films and clothbound books of wars, and

the near southern foliage relished biting my skin
into crust. but i could recite stories of a glass cola
bottle boy in homewood park with his own father,
and it seemed crucial. he walked with me to the

yellowing field beside the elementary school i
never attended. we tossed a dusted baseball back
and forth, shadowed by the annual sledding hill.
muted jungle gyms a decade past watched across

the gravelly road. out of practice, i repeatedly
closed my hands over vacant air. ghostly girls
flitted between us, tugging at pastel clotheslines,
lifting a wicker watermelon, opening bloody

ankles onto swept asphalt. i don't remember our
conversation, only reaching for the ball, reaching
back. we played until the grass darkened under
deepening blue, vivid timex green chiming end.

leah's house

unwillingly shoed, we skip down a road of busted asphalt and coffee clotted dirt, whirling in light paisley print. our new fingers have combed prickly bushes for blackberries, listened for suitable fetching sticks. we toss them to your panting, golden dog who stretches like static between graying twigs

and the boiling orange sun. a pair of barbie sandals wink in cherry starbursts. the intensity over whether bananas are vegetables has revived. our lollipop voices haven't learned to dialogue yet, loose glitter giggles scatter unaware. most of our hands juice purple with nibbling before we find the turn back,

chainlink wrapping up two clapboard houses and a pear tree. bedtime steps closer among knobby brussels sprouts and ice cream cake, inside the three thousand miles between alaska and indiana. we beg to stay up. we set the playhouse with floral china plates and the uneaten pears blow down around us.

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you, sliver slide into
something unstable
divided, you binary flipflop
mirrored or right either left
exclusion, a decision
no neutral ground for you
regressing pivot point
you pick apart a piece
leaving the other hugging
the ghostly line of what
almost could have been



Rebecca Woolsey has graduated from Columbia College Chicago with an MFA in poetry. She was second runner up for Eileen Lannan Poetry Contest and a two-time presenter at both the International Sigma Tau Delta Convention and the Twin Cities Writing Revue. Rebecca's poetry was featured in *The Wineskin* literary magazine in 2017. She currently resides in Chicago with her rescue goldfish, Tyler.