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1240 Sherman Avenue

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## Recent Angels

*in memory of Tina Geraci*

If you see her you will know her  
by the way she glances sideways  
as you pass. Keeps you at  
the edge of her sight. She is one

who knows silence as native language,  
and fog as cloud fallen to earth  
to slow recent angels in their  
haste to rise. It is the breath

of those who die young, who are  
alone late, and it is your silence,  
by which she knows you.

She has heard this silence before.  
It is her name, not spoken,  
over and over and over again.

*Judith Strasser*

### **1240 Sherman Avenue**

Days, she screams, cajoles, bitches, crawls  
on her belly like a snake. Nights, she throws  
herself onto the bed, muffles her sobs  
with down plumped in long-staple cotton.

The woman who lives here knows  
 that the coin that buys houses, soap for the bath,  
 clothes for her children, lapis lazuli  
 necklaces matched with earrings set in gold,

is paid by the hand that slaps her around.  
 In the back, long-limbed boys row  
 fragile shells over the lake. In the front,  
 silver maples dwarf the colonnade,  
 sway in light breezes, drop leaves in high wind,  
 threaten to break with every storm.

*Tim Muren*

## **The Memory Game**

My father holds a stringer above a river – two catfish  
 hang against the greasy sky. Photographic evidence  
 he wasn't always ancient, he says.

I remember the suck of water as he rose up  
 from the bathtub. I picture him up there, upstairs,  
 thirty years younger, the dead moths inside

the milky, glass bulb form a black, triangular heap of brittle  
 wings above him. Through the door, clutching  
 a terrycloth towel with one fist

at his hip. He kicks my scattered toys at me,  
 demanding a clear path. Sometimes lately, is it  
 my imagination? A storm rises through a space