

Homesickness

I dream again of the house
I grew up in, windows that open
to one enormous tree, the leaves
dipping in like small birds.
Visions so convincing
that when I awake I expect to be young,
then all day feel nostalgic, denied.

I keep calling my mother as if
I had something important to tell her.
She is usually napping. We are both
embarrassed to find I had nothing to say.
I reassure her that she is reassuring me.

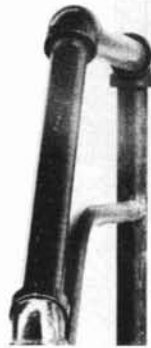
As children, my mother and I were unaware
of the personal boundaries our existence created.
We cannot remember when we learned
we were different from what was around us.

The house of my childhood, of my dreams,
still stood two years ago,
still white and green. My mother's past
now exists in her mind.

The barn's torn down, the road
so changed she can't find where it was
and the family who remembered it with her is dead.

When I hang up the phone, will my mother still be there?
When I go home, and she is gone, what will become of me?

Laura McDonald



(photograph by Don O. Thorpe)