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Poem by Lucy M. Logsdon



My Place in Line

Our seasons change swiftly.
Sudden silence of insects.
Cattle bedding before sundown.
Finches, cardinals, sparrows fatten;
start hanging by my window for seed.
The hummingbirds leave all at once.
There on Monday, Tuesday gone.
No bird gets left behind. My sister
starts falling apart first, mother follows
close. I know the signs; I see

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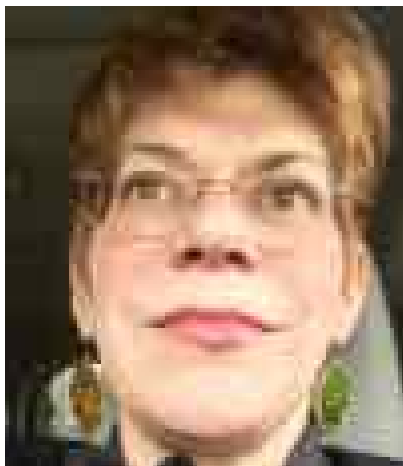
Published on Talking Writing (<https://talkingwriting.com>)

the shortened breaths, longer naps.
Their eyes hurt me most: each time,
there's a fatigue like departure. A hand
waving good-bye from a car, an airplane,
life's bus.

Through winter, I scramble, try to hold
their bodies together. Chemo. Mouth balms. IVs.
Tamoxifen, Hep-era, ports, steroids, narcotics.
I scour the Internet. Bible of doom and gloom.
The message clear: lie down now; it's over;
we're sorry; give up. I don't.
Of course, I am left behind.
What we do doesn't save us.
Or anyone else. Departure's
already occurring. Listen:
diminishment. The dying
have more important things
to attend to: like dying.
Grief is their nation,
I'll have my chance later.
When the hummingbirds return,
I greet them by myself.
Put food in their feeder.
Line-cutting not allowed here.
Gravestones set up chronologically.
I have my marker, position.
The one unfinished headstone.
Death date: Incomplete.

Art information

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Lucy M. Logsdon's work has appeared in publications such as *Nimrod*, *Literary Orphans*, *Heron Tree*, *Poet Lore*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *Iodine*, *Sixfold*, *Seventeen*, *Conclave*, *Drafthorse*, *Right Hand Pointing*, *Rust & Moth* and *Gingerbread Literary Review*.

Recipient of a MacDowell Colony fellowship, she's now back in rural America, raising chickens, ducks, and other occasional creatures with her husband and two rebel step-grrrls.

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