Goose Butt,
Grandma Glasses,
And Other Ordinary Things

A Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Fine Arts in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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Abstract

We are afraid to forget and to be forgotten: we collect, catalog and archive so that we may know what came before and that we might be remembered. Our lives are built on this premise; whether for show or for sentiment, much can be said about the things we keep. We don’t save unwanted things. We rid our homes of the old, the used, the unnecessary. We bury our embarrassments. Memory is slippery, unstable and fragile, while these objects of our disregard are concrete presences. My work invests attention in life’s cast-offs. I am interested in the relation between these physical things, the social and personal memories they contain, the words we use to name them and the snapshots that serve as their record. My material is found in these images, descriptions, and display. And in them is the recall of our lives.
Dedication

for Rex & Bonnie,
with love and gratitude
I would like to express a special appreciation to my advisor Aspen Mays for her encouragement and support. You have been such a great influence on me and for that I am ever grateful. I would also like to thank the following faculty for their guidance along the way: Jessica Mallios, Rebecca Harvey, Ann Hamilton, & Tony Mendoza.
Vita

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Field of Study

Major Field: Art
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Chapter 1: The Materialization of Memory

I save things: notes I find on the street, cards from past birthdays, and even embarrassing, adolescent photographs. This is a reflection of my own psychological fear of being forgotten and I know I am not alone. We collect things to commemorate our own lives, to reflect on certain occasions and pass them along when we are no longer here. Preservation of these things can, at times, be absurd. Because of the abundance of contemporary life, things will always be fated to be unused. However, we can never be sure what will become important markers of memory, this is why we take countless snapshots of vacations, celebrations and weddings. They act as souvenirs of experience and ease the anxiety of passing time.

My artistic process typically begins with a personal experience or memory. Next, it moves to finding and studying an artifact of this experience, then on to wondering how to recall experience through materiality. My work manifests itself in different variations of the same idea: the stand-in. What I mean by this is that I am interested in making a material substitute for experience. These stand-ins take different forms (table 1)—images, objects and language—and in them I attempt to find the essence of a particular personal experience. In Camera Lucida, Roland Barthes discusses the difference between “recognizing” and “finding” his dead mother in family photographs. He claims that he finally “finds” her in an image of her as a child. On page 71, he writes “...The Winter Garden Photograph achieved for me, utopically, the impossible science of the unique being.” Barthes believes that by “finding” his mother, he is able to actually hold onto her after she is gone.
In comparison, throughout my work, I am attempting to find the essence of a memory or an interpreted experience but unlike Barthes, I usually fall short. Experience can be recalled but never relived. I believe it is not enough for memories to exist in consciousness; they must be made material in order to not be forgotten. We must be reminded, for recall is not always voluntary and memory is slippery, unstable and fragile while these forms are concrete. In this thesis, I will discuss the capabilities and limitations of language, image and objects, and my interest in the gap between these forms. For I believe memory does not always live in one place but rather the space in-between.
Table 2. Stand-in

THE STAND-IN
Chapter 2: The Editing Process

My artistic practice is an editing process. Below is a list of actions I use. These actions do not always happen in this set order, sometimes they work backwards, or get mixed up somewhere in the middle. The critical parts of this practice are bold.

To select
To choose
**To collect** (see figure 11)
To compile
To compose
To assemble
To erase
To remove
To omit
To eliminate
To cut
**To withhold** (see figure 1)
To delete
To alter
To refine
To reconstruct
**To describe** (see figure 4)
To point
To change
To add
To cover
To conceal
To exclude
To analyze
**To compare** (see figure 8)
I use photography as both a pointing device and as a way to fragment or re-frame life. It allows me to look through my own lens, to show others what and how I see. Through the use of the camera, I can capture and collect things that aren’t mine and examine my own identity and experience. Photography is a way to have, to hold, to remember.

Roland Barthes wrote, “For once, photography gave me a sentiment as certain as remembrance.” (70) I think of photographs as stand-ins for memories. The stark direct-flash photographs of the series Here Without Me (see figure 1, figure 2) contemplate both the vernacular of the snapshot and its function as a private record. By rephotographing an old photograph, I am able to connect the past to the present. The hand in the photograph obscures something in the frame—it hides a younger me. By using the gesture of the hand, my identity is both concealed and revealed. Through this simple act of editing, I am absent and present at the same time. In one image, a man speaks to the hand, in another, two girls lean on the thumb to create a new formal relationship between the subjects. Through self-concealment, I am erasing a memory and inserting myself into a new one.
Figure 1. Jessica Naples, *Exchanging Gifts with Grandma June on Christmas Eve*

Figure 2. Jessica Naples, *Bath Time With Grandpa Bill*
**Quiz For The Artist**

Photography is about discovery.  

It allows the viewer to enter a portal into a particular moment.  

It is specific and tied to time.  

You can’t photograph something that doesn’t exist.  

There is always a referent; a photograph can never be divorced from the thing itself.  

Photography is all about looking, noticing.  

It flattens our three-dimensional world into a two-dimensional object.  

It lets us look without being looked at.  

It has an indexical quality.  

It’s easily stored.  

It’s a copy of a copy.  

It is a fragment of time.  

It tells the truth.

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Chapter 4: Using Language

A page is an intimate space, a place where I can say things I wouldn’t or couldn’t say aloud. The subject of my poetic writing includes encounters with other people. I am always comparing myself with an other. My poems emphasize odd details of the everyday. For example in On the Train (see page 36) a woman writes the wrong words in the blanks of crossword puzzles as a businessman checks his watch. I focus on objects in a particular scene and the relationship they have to people. The poems are full of observations and, like my photographic mappings (refer to chapter 5), they often include objective comments and other times, more subjective remarks. In order for my poems to work as stories, there must be a balance between subjectivity and objectivity, or what is in the scene and what is being seen. The poems have a vignette-quality almost like pictorial snapshots. I believe a photograph shows everything yet tells nothing. In my writing, I tend to do something similar, I generously give the reader details yet withhold the meaning of the story. I am heavily influenced by Elizabeth Bishop and the restraint she exhibits in her poems. For example, in her piece In the Waiting Room, she writes,
In Worcester, Massachusetts,
I went with Aunt Consuelo
to keep her dentist’s appointment
and sat and waited for her
in the dentist’s waiting room.
It was winter. It got dark
early. The waiting room
was full of grown-up people,
arctics and overcoats,
lamps and magazines.
My aunt was inside
what seemed like a long time
and while I waited I read
the National Geographic
(I could read) and carefully
studied the photographs:
the inside of a volcano,
black, and full of ashes;
then it was spilling over
in rivulets of fire.
Osa and Martin Johnson
dressed in riding breeches,
laced boots, and pith helmets.
A dead man slung on a pole
—"Long Pig," the caption said.
Babies with pointed heads
wound round and round with string;
black, naked women with necks
wound round and round with wire
like the necks of light bulbs.
Their breasts were horrifying.
I read it right straight through.
I was too shy to stop.
And then I looked at the cover:
the yellow margins, the date.
Suddenly, from inside,
came an oh! of pain
—Aunt Consuelo’s voice—
not very loud or long.
I wasn’t at all surprised;
even then I knew she was
a foolish, timid woman.
I might have been embarrassed,
but wasn’t. What took me
completely by surprise
was that it was me:
my mouth, in my mouth.
Without thinking at all
I was my foolish aunt,
I—we—were falling, falling,
our eyes glued to the cover
of the National Geographic,
February, 1918.

I was saying it to stop
the sensation of falling off
the round, turning world
into cold, blue-black space.
But I felt: you are an I,
you are an Elizabeth,
you are one of them.
Why should you be one, too?
I scarcely dared to look
to see what it was I was.
I gave a side long glance
—I couldn’t look any higher—at shadowy gray knees,
trousers and skirts and boots
and different pairs of hands
lying under the lamps.
I knew that nothing ever stranger
had ever happened, that nothing
stranger could ever happen.

Why should I be my aunt,
or me, or anyone?
What similarities—boots, hands, the family voice
I felt in my throat, or even
the National Geographic
and those awful hanging breasts—
held us all together
or made us all just one?
How—I didn’t know any
word for it—how “unlikely” . . .
How had I come to be here,
like them, and over hear
a cry of pain that could have
had got loud and worse but hadn’t?

The waiting room was bright
and too hot. It was sliding
beneath a big black wave,
another, and another.

Then I was back in it.
The War was on. Outside,
in Worcester, Massachusetts,
were night and slush and cold,
and it was still the fifth
of February, 1918.

(Bishop, 179-181)
Elizabeth Bishop’s matter of fact tone resonates with me. In the Waiting Room, she is able to create an internal struggle of identity without using excessive language. The narrative of In the Waiting Room may be easily followed because of its short lineation and use of common diction. Although it may read effortlessly, the ideas it contains are not transparent. Bishop has carefully constructed a complex, existential reflection. The younger Elizabeth, or the speaker, contemplates the meaning of womanhood by looking at photographs in the National Geographic. One of the images she describes is of a baby whose head was “wound round and round with string” and another of a woman whose breasts she calls “horrifying”. However, it is only when she thinks she hears her aunt’s voice that she understands that she is a woman too. She writes, “But I felt: you are an I, you are an Elizabeth, you are one of them.” I am interested in her description of internal and external experience and how the speaker goes back in forth to thinking about herself to looking at others. I am drawn to the idea of “finding yourself through an other,” and believe that many of my poems are just as much descriptions of others as much as they are reflections of myself.
She died on the couch, which my mother says is less awful than dying in the bedroom. Her house was a museum; it was full of old things. I inherited a paint-by-number, coated with lacquer and dust. I stole a picture off the mantle—a wallet-sized souvenir of her window’s peak and the uneven spaces between her teeth.

In the poem *Portrait* (figure 3), I attempt to create a picture of the speaker and the subject through dichotomies. There is a contrast between the private and the public: the living room versus the bedroom, the home versus the museum. There is the socially acceptable form of receiving someone else’s things: inheritance, versus the not-so-acceptable method: stealing. I intentionally question how people remember, through stand-ins, or objects and photographs. Since the painting in the poem couldn’t possibly retain the memory of the subject, the speaker decided to take something else, a physical representation of the body, the photograph.

Whose portrait is the poem referring to? Even though the poem describes characteristics of the woman—“her widow’s peak” and “spaces between teeth”—is the poem a portrait of the deceased or the speaker? In the poem, I examine different forms in which portraiture has been prominent (painting and photography) and where these media typically live, in houses and museums.

Like in *Portrait*, my prose poems are composed of long and short sentences, a technique that moves the reader along the page. In *Lunch at Mert’s*, (see page 34) a story about an encounter with an eccentric man, I write, …*He wasn’t wearing any socks. His shoes were boats. He spoke slow, smelling like used things; I listened as the windows rose with water until the waitress interrupted…* Since there are no line breaks, the sentence structure is a way to create pauses for the reader. Unlike my photographs, my poems are progressive narratives. They
have a beginning, middle and end, even though they are never ever fully resolved. There is always tension between two things. They end banally and abruptly… One check, or two? as if what happens next is unknowable. Although the narrative of my poems differs from that of my photography, in a way, these endings act similar to photographs: they suspend in time, unresolved, lingering on what happens next.
If this chart represents my writing, what would a chart look like that represents my images?
Chapter 5: Image & Language

Table 4. In-Between Photography & Poetry
My term, *mapping*, refers to a visual and linguistic representation of a scene. I create mappings to highlight relationships between subjects and objects of a particular photographic space. For me, mappings exist halfway between poems and photographs, for a poem is confined by the page the same way the frame binds a photograph. My mappings borrow conventions from both genres.

I am interested in imaging a view through language, investigating what we see versus what we say we see. I will borrow the language of Roland Barthes and his dual idea of the *studium* and *punctum*. I use a mapping to address the studium of an image, that is, what the photographer has decided to include in the frame, whereas the title of a mapping, works as the punctum or my personal prick of the photographic experience.

Figure 4. Jessica Naples, *Grandma Glasses*  
Figure 5. Jessica Naples, *Grandma Glasses*, detail
My Process of Mapping:

1. I find a photograph that interests me. In *Grandma Glasses* and *Goose Butt*, I used personal family snapshots in which I was present but had no recollection.

2. I look at the photograph. I really examine it, I play detective. I notice things in the background, people’s expressions, and odd details included in the frame.

3. I try to give the things I notice names. I describe everything in the photograph that I can. I usually miss something.

4. I use a thesaurus to try to find the perfect words to communicate what I see. I say the words aloud. I’m not afraid of alliteration or repetition. I try to balance subjectivity and objectivity.

5. I spatially place these words above the things they describe. For *Grandma Glasses* and *Goose Butt*, I scanned the snapshots and used the computer for the layout.

6. Then I print the mapping on photo paper.

7. I look at the print; I say the words aloud again.

8. I use paint to cover words. This is a fast, intuitive editing process. Sometimes the concealed descriptions are parts of the image that I am less drawn to, other times I’m not sure why I choose to cover them up.

9. Finally I title the mapping using my personal punctum of the photographic experience.
Though this process I am able to show my own interpretation and bring forth details in the image that I find interesting. I can point to certain parts of a photograph and show where they exist on the page. I can show externally my internal experience of reading/seeing an image.

Unlike my photographs, my mappings allow the viewer/reader to create their own picture in his or her mind. They fragment the photograph, something we typically see as a whole, into parts of people, places and things. It calls into question the photograph as a framing device and a fragment in time. Contrary to the use of narrative in my poems, my mappings exist as still, confined moments, as non-advancing narratives.
Chapter 6: Mapping Goose Butt

Figure 6. Jessica Naples, Goose Butt
One day as I was looking through a family album, I came across a photograph of me and my grandfather. I understood that it was us; although younger, I knew his face, and I recognized myself, more than likely from seeing other images at that age. It was such a tender moment between us and yet, I couldn’t remember it. There was a sadness that day that I couldn’t escape, so I started describing the snapshot, thinking that perhaps if I listed enough details of the image, I might recall it.

This lead to the creation of the mapping *Goose Butt* (figure 6) where the words are arranged spatially on the page in reference to the original image. Where I stood is described as: bangs, sleepy eyes, jean jumper, where my grandfather was: italian nose, aviator glasses, track jacket, and the landscape around us: mud, river. Because of the nature of photographic space, the words float in two-dimensions. All the words are on the same plane, flattened as if a photograph. The isolation of language and the negative space between lets the viewer think about time and space as his or her eyes move around the page. The descriptions are typeset in uppercase Helvetica Bold and printed on luster photo paper. The easy-to-read words are contrasted with swift, gestural marks made using black matte paint. The paint covers words that I felt were secondary in the scene, such as tree, sky, shoe. Through this process, the marks also draw attention to themselves because of their graphic quality. The flatness of the paint sits on the shininess of the paper and the mark of the hand rests next to the mechanical type. By combining the words and marks on the page, I am able to create a new image that has similarities to the original photograph; the marks mimic the ripples in the river. The process becomes recursive, moving from image to text to text back to image.
Although I have been referring to these works (Goose Butt, Grandma Glasses) as mappings, I’m not quite certain if they really are just maps anymore. Sure, they spatially locate something on a page but they do other things too; they are drawings of memories, censored paintings, redacted poems, and a detailed list of things.
I grew up living with my grandparents. My grandmother took care of me while my parents were at work. I knew her quite well (how she didn’t like to wear socks, why she used to read the dictionary, what she liked to cook on Sundays) and heard stories about her after her death. My grandfather and I, on the other hand, hardly ever spoke. In fact, he hardly ever said anything to anyone. It wasn’t until I was an adult that I wondered things about him. I made the video, *I’m Not Good At Answering Questions*, while I was home in 2013. When I interviewed my grandfather, who is now in his nineties, I wasn’t quite certain what I would ask or what he might say. So I started with something we had in common: my grandmother. I asked about how they met and their wedding day.
His answer was usually no, I can’t recall, or no, I don’t remember. Other times, he would repeat back to me exactly what I had asked him, “Did you wear a flower?” Yah, I wore a flower. I remember leaving disappointed with his answers and frustrated with his memory. How could he not remember the day he was married? How could he be so uncertain? I was saddened by his inability to recall. I had wanted to hear vivid memories of his and her life together.

*I’m Not Good At Answering Questions* is a short two-minute color video of my grandfather’s responses. Since my grandfather repeated everything I said, I have edited my voice out using hard cuts. My grandfather looks off to the side of the camera, repeating himself over and over as the video loops. The only indication of time passing is the chime of the grandfather clock that happens right before the video restarts. The noise reminds us that time has passed by and that one day our own memories might be lost too.
I transcribed the above video from memory. It is as follows:

*I'm not good at answering questions.*

*Well we met over at her brother’s house, that’s where we met.*

*No, I don’t remember what dress it was.*

*Yeah she wore a dress then... but I don’t remember what it was like.*

*Well I just wore the suit that I had. It was brown color. My suit was.*

*Yah I had a little flower on and I wore a tie.*

*We didn’t have no big long wedding. We just had a small one.*

*I was married to her until ten years ago. I was married to her fifty years.*

*I don’t have nothing... nothing of her wearings.*

*(Clock chimes)*

*Yah... and that’s the way I remember it.*
A year after I made the video, I found a photograph of my grandparents’ wedding day. This image has become the counterpart to I’m Not Good At Answering Questions. At first I wondered what was closer to the truth: his story or this image? Then I began to realize that both were fragmented. The photograph was a single moment, suspended in time like his memory was refracted through his experience and transformed over years. Neither could hold the complete memory alone. I had to look at both pieces in order to fill in the gaps.

Figure 10. Jessica Naples. Wedding Day, found photograph
Chapter 8: Collecting Memories

Like photographs, objects also have memories attached to them; they serve as a reminder of a particular experience. I always wondered if there was a way I could collect other people’s memories. My project For Safe Keeping (figure 11) is just that, an investigation into objects that have sentimental value to other people. In the summer of 2012, I started frequenting yard sales. Seeing what other people owned fascinated me. I loved rummaging through their things. I liked looking at how they were arranged. I wondered what personal value they had, so I decided that I would ask the person who was selling their things to show me something that they hoped wouldn’t sell. To my surprise, people were happy to pick something out and explain why it was meaningful. I listened to their stories and then politely asked if I could buy the item. Each time, I felt guilty about taking something away from its owner. But to my disappointment, no one ever changed his or her mind; they all let me take home the thing they just said had personal meaning as if they weren’t sad to see it go since they had told its story.

After collecting other people’s things, I wasn’t quite certain what to do with them. I wanted to keep them in a place they would be safe and wouldn’t contaminate or confuse me of their meaning. I decided to have a display case built to house the objects. The vitrine is long and skinny, almost coffin-like. Inside sits a ragdoll, a Rambo lunchbox, and a book among other things. A card lists its contents and explains how the objects were collected. The used objects have little to no monetary value; some were purchased for less than five dollars and others were given away. The only value is the one we project onto
Figure 11. Jessica Naples, *For Safe Keeping*, installation view

Figure 12. Jessica Naples, *For Safe Keeping*, detail
them because of the emotional and psychological space they occupy. They remind us of the stuffed animal we carried as a child and knickknacks that fill our homes.

Is it context and presentation that signals the importance of things? What is the difference between my presentation of the objects and the original owner’s presentation? What is the difference between the objects of *For Safe Keeping* and those inside a museum? Is it that objects in an institution have social and cultural meaning not just personal meaning?

There is something about the traces we leave behind, they remind us that the places we inhabit and the things that we own weren’t always ours and won’t always be. It is only evidence of what once was.
Bibliography


Appendix A: Required Reading

Figure 13. Jessica Naples, Book of Poems, installation view
for Jane & Mike with love and security
NOT SMILING

The air was thick
with fried pickles, dough,
Oreos, as we approached
a hand-painted sign advertising
“Old Time Photos.”

My mother and I hid behind
a dressing screen as we dug through
trunks of silk dresses. She picked pink,
I chose blue. She wrapped a white bow
around me, stuck a feather in my hair.
Everything was lacy.

Outside, my father tilted
his brown fans cowboy hat
with one hand, clinked an empty jug
of what was meant to be whiskey
with the other, all with a red, wrinkled
bandana around his neck.

An assistant placed us
in front of the faded blue
western backdrop, turned
our heads as if we were marionettes,
and told us to smile for the camera.
LUNCH AT MERT’S

We met there once, when it was pouring down rain. Bankers swam in the streets while we ate barbeque smothered pork butt and warm cornbread. My mascara ran and when he finally saw me, he assumed I had been crying. His hair was slicked back, parted on the side, the way I imagined a German soldier’s looked under a helmet. When he tapped his fingers on the table, it reminded me he was good with numbers. He looked at his set colleagues as I peered under the table. He wasn’t wearing any socks. His shoes were boots. He spoke slow, smelling like used things; I listened as the windrose rose with water, until the waitress interrupted, the deal, or too?

MISTER

I found a photograph of a younger you yesterday in a pile of yellowed birthday cards. Sadly there was no date on the back—

how very like me.
THE SECRETARY

for Tony Mendez

The day before the Christmas party, Mr. Taylor informed me of the importance of a fine suit, a quality watch, and confidence.

The next night, avoiding men and mistletoe, while watching Al from admiring familiars for words, I noticed Mr. Taylor dancing with his wife.

Her eyes on him, his eyes on her, they laughed over a scene. When the song ended, they kissed and parted.

A few minutes later, he walked up to me,

* Merry Christmas, Mrs. and placed

a small white box in my hand. Inside,

a Swiss wristwatch engraved with my initials.

Soon it would be 1963, the year I'd throw my own party straight into Hudson.

JUNE 21ST

Will you join me? she asks, her wrinkled hands crossed with diamonds, emeralds and rubies from another life. I do not reply. Can you join her? she asks while holding out an anniversary clock, the third one she's bought this week. I want to tell her that like the others, it too is broken—instead I turn the hands back in time.
ON THE TRAIN

She seems like the kind of woman
that writes the wrong words
in the blanks of crossword puzzles, a middle
child with too brothers. I watch
as she moves
slowly, holding her breath.

It’s so quiet in the train car that I hear my own breath.
Across from me is a young businessman
whose mouth absent-mindedly moves.
“How did I get into this mess,” barely discernible words
as he checks his watch—
golden numbers with diamonds in the middle.

An attendant makes his way up the middle
aisle, asking for tickets with his hot, panting breath.
His dark eyes watch
the wrinkled hands of a woman
frantically dig through her pockets. They exchange words,
he keeps moving.

The train moves
steadily through the middle
of mountains. A place where words
and breath
are somehow. Again, I find myself watching
the breathless woman.

This time, unlike the others, the woman
is smiling. Her fingers move
across hand-written pages, her eyes shift as if searching
a film with flat subtitles. In the middle
of all of this, I swear I see her take a breath
between words.

I want to know what the words
say. Are they letters from a dear friend or an admiring man?
With fixed breath,
I move
to meet her in the middle.
No one else is watching.
PICTURE ON A PAGE

She used to call me Petunia.
Perhaps it was her favorite flower.
I'm not sure, I never thought to ask.

I grew up without siblings
in a house among strangers,
my bedroom between
their separate rooms.
My parents were far away,
existing in the basement below.

One night, a sound woke me.
At first, I thought it was my cat
coughing up a fishbone, and then
it happened again, louder;
though softer all at once.

I pressed my ear against
the cold wall, knots tying
themselves inside my stomach.
She was crying.

I lay there watching the sun
rise and then set, before
stepping out of bed.

I tiptoed to his room, a place
I had only been during daytime.
I watched his chest rise and fall
shaking his shoulders until he woke.

Gonna, it's Gonna, I whispered.

She used to call me Dorenia
but I can't make any meaning
of this definition and picture on the page.

MOUNTAIN

I will die
in the small town
of Post Falls, Idaho
on a quiet afternoon,
a rainy day.

That's easy to forget.
I will succumb
to the mountain's misery
a few thousand miles
from home, smelling like cedar,
where I know no one
and no one I know
knows where I am.

I will pass
wondering if you ever
wondered about me.
THE MAN WHO BOUGHT OUR 1978 TRIUMPH SPITFIRE

“...When I was a boy, it was my dream to be an artist,” he said to me.

He clasped his collar, covering a hole in his chest.

I tried not to stare at the scar, a place to which you were once sent, but found myself looking anyway.

Later, I learned he had caught cancer from fixing cars.

THE BAD NOTS

I wish I hadn’t killed your fish named Symona; stole your favorite stuffed rat or told others how you were embarrassed about the mole on your chin. I wish I hadn’t locked all the bedroom doors from the inside or moved you when you ran from boy. I wish I hadn’t broken your grandmother’s flower vase, defaced your school picture, and egged your house. Would things be different if I hadn’t had the bible you gave me or been too busy to say goodbye?
YELLOW BATHING SUIT

I remember that summer, every time
I see the scar on my left foot—
running through the sprinkler with Carrie in her yellow
bathing suit, the color of mixed barley,
my three-legged turtle that my mother named Snobby
escaping from the laundry basket,
the condensation of my father’s beer can
leaving a ring on the glass piano table,
getting stung by a bee after we destroyed its hive,
the trail of grandpa’s odor after he spent
an afternoon mowing the field,
Mercy the cat dropping dead mice on the Welcome mat
at the side door,
my great-aunty Constance telling me,
"Your fingers are too fat to wear rings!"
and the scratch of marigolds.

PORTRAIT

She died on the couch, which my mother says is less awful
than dying in the bedroom. Her house was a museum; it was
full of old things. I inherited a paints-by-number, coated with
lazur and dust. I stole a picture off the mantel—a well-sixed
assortment of her widow’s peak and the uneven spaces between
her teeth.
A special thanks to
Amy Mey
Jason Math
Rebecca Dante
& Kelly Payne

This handmade book & scrapbook, a mix of 13 photos, memorabilia
in Riverside, autographed at The Ohio State University in 2016.
Appendix B: Index

The following appendix is an index of influences and ideas that are crucial to my practice.
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