

Editor's Notes

Proleptic Time and the Lives of Grandmothers

*Centered on the world's stage,
she sings to her loves and beloveds,
to her foes and detractors:
However I am perceived and deceived,
however my ignorance and conceits,
lay aside your fears that I will be undone,
for I shall not be moved.*

—Maya Angelou, “Our Grandmothers”

In this special themed issue on Grandmothers, our writers in *Folio* speak of a fascinating range of experiences, of generational and cultural differences voiced in innovative forms.

Poems by yaya Yao are beautifully crafted and sensory. In her poems, “thanks” and “turned,” the narrator explores immigrant experience through the lenses of a granddaughter’s desires juxtaposed against a grandmother’s dreams.

Trela Anderson writes a moving personal essay titled “Sugar Bread Dreams,” an account of her personal relationship with the Langston Hughes poem “Harlem.” Anderson’s narrative moves into memory, evoking the image of sugar bread in Hughes’ poem as a continuous thread in a story about her grandmother and adopted grandson.

Robbie Kahn writes her “Aziz Journal” from the narrative perspective of a grandmother. “Aziz Journal” is a deeply contemplative and evocative work, one that emanates an intense physicality in the writing, a sensory awareness of the body and the world that is keenly felt. Kahn brings us close to the experience

of growing to know a grandchild through the sensual details of memory, touch, love and trust.

In “Re-constructing Romania” Karen Krasny has created a “Readers’ Theatre in Five Voices,” a unique dramatic form for exploring the theme of foreign adoption. This is an autobiographical account of Krasny’s own experiences of becoming an adoptive mother of two Romanian born boys and bringing them back to Canada. The story took on deep historical and personal significance when Krasny found herself in a region close to her paternal grandmother’s birthplace and in proximity to her mother-in-law’s former home in Ukraine prior to her internment in a Nazi work camp.

Renee Norman’s beautiful poem “Fresh Sheets” also evokes memory and loss, the strong sense of a grandmother who is somehow still with her granddaughter, somewhere in the continued rituals of changing sheets, not only in remembrance of a grandmother’s death, but in the present, the act of making up a bed with fresh sheets becoming a gift of the living: “laid with fresh ripe raspberries/the smell of mustard basted onto brisket.”

Laurie Kruk writes a poetic contemplation set in Canada of the history of a grandmother, Baba, originally from the former Soviet Union. The rhythms of Baba’s speech are caught brilliantly in this work titled “Time Coming.” Baba’s aging and dying in a nursing home coincides with a granddaughter giving birth. The mother becomes “the timekeeper,” and what remains breathes “in the beats/of mother time.”

Karen Krasny writes in her introduction of “the sense that the past impinges on the present in ways that ground future possibilities.” This perspective of proleptic time is evident in the works of the writers in this issue of *Folio*. The writings form a historiographic poesis through ancestral time in the re-imaginings and reconstructions of the histories of grandmothers, histories of trauma, hardship, joy, sorrow, mourning, loss, hope, infinite possibility.

—Rishma Dunlop