

Nancy Haskett

Crayola Memories

I.

My mother,
who delighted in using watercolors, oils, acrylics,
soon learned that a page from her sketchbook –
heavy, textured, and blank –
brought only frustration to me;
so we took old crayons,
small leftovers of brick red, midnight blue, burnt sienna,
sea green, turquoise blue,
peeled off paper,
twisted the smooth nubbins
in a tiny pencil sharpener,
watched as colorful curls mounded on waxed paper
which we folded, pressed with a hot iron,
the hues melted and blended together,
formed an abstract painting
taped in a window
to glow like stained glass.

II.

My father,
who had a place for everything –
tools traced and hung in matched shapes
on the workbench wall,
paper clips, pencils, photos
neatly divided in tins and cigar boxes in his desk drawers –
gave me coloring books,
the images already there,
easy to complete with colors of my choosing,
and he taught me how to outline,
to follow the pattern,
press the crayon around the edge
slightly darker,
then fill in the empty spaces
carefully, methodically,
the same way I learned to be a perfectionist,
to crave neatness, order,
to follow the rules,
to live my life
staying within the lines

Abbey Road

I.

My granddaughters think it's some kind of magic,
how I know which song comes next –
that *Something* follows *Come Together*,
how *Golden Slumbers* morphs right into *Carry that Weight* –
the way I can sing the upcoming notes before they are played,
how I know almost every word
from every track
by heart;
maybe someday they'll play one of their CDs over and over,
one hundred times,
two hundred times,
like we played that record in the fall of '69,
the early months of '70,
down in the church basement,
the one we converted into a "coffee house"
called the Free Spirit,
spent hours playing pool
with that album on the phonograph,
finished Side One *I Want You*,
flipped it over *Here Comes the Sun*,
again and again
so that now, in my car over forty-five years later,
when the songs play I hear
the echoes of billiard balls
click and knock together –
the background accompaniment,
percussive apparitions

II.

The studio and crosswalk are still here,
but the painted lines are different now,
and it's a busy street;
everyone waits until it's clear
in both directions,
steps out and walks to the opposite corner,
tries to picture the album cover –
first John in white suit and tennis shoes,
Ringo in black with boots,
Paul barefoot, cigarette in his right hand,
George last in denim blue.

We cross the street today
and despite all the years and changes,
there is a connection,
a contentment,
knowing we are here where they were.

If the Palm Reader Had a Distant Cousin

perhaps she could read floors –
wait until the light slanted through the window
at just the right angle,
bend down on knees, tilt her head,
run her fingers over lines and scratches
that tell a history,
not the future;
like the deep indentations in the kitchen
where the Hoosier pushed down its casters,
the grooves in the dining room
where heavy chairs pushed back and forth
to a table,
the heelmarks of heavy boots on the stairs,
and, if she were very observant,
the tiny heart and initials
engraved in the far corner of the bedroom,
left by the original owners
who built the house
so many years ago

Nancy Haskett has been writing since she was in high school. An educator for over 30 years, she retired in 2011 and is an active member of the poetry community in Modesto, CA. She is a member of the Ina Coolbrith Circle, MoSt (Modesto Stanislaus Poetry Center), National League of American Penwomen and other local writing groups. Nancy has presented her poetry at the Carnegie Arts Center in Turlock, CA and has been published in many places, including the anthology *More than Soil, More than Sky*; *Stanislaus Connections*; *Penumbra*; *Homestead Review*; *Iodine Press*; *Song of the San Joaquin*; *The Pen Woman*, and more. In her spare time, Nancy enjoys reading, traveling, and spending time with her family.