

Three Poems by Carol Hamilton

House of Limestone

Rise and fall of road at western stretch
of Flint Hills all scalped to horizon
The map's red print (used to denote
community college and wildlife refuge)
says we just passed The Garden of Eden
We drive along south of the Geodetic Center
of North America and a little more south
of the World's Largest Ball of Twine
The little town of Sylvan Grove
does not appear as blessed as its name
but the home where we stop at last
stands old and magical
The stonecutter father works
on the limestone fences to keep
the sheep and horses from straying

All night after lamb roast
and fresh apple pie unpasteurized milk
and a jigsaw puzzle (we each dropped
deep down into featherbeds)
we listen to the white and wooly dog
make his rounds with low woofs
to keep the coyotes at bay Come day
I prepare to leave after pure maple syrup
He greets me with exhausted, rheumy eyes
He seems to know that we all slept secure
with his monotonous music encircling us
This travel south plunges me back
into the brick-and-mortar world
my march-to-the-drumbeat world
where I must dash on now to the next sale

Living in the Moment

Big as all Texas still, the reservoir
is disappearing, long drive down
to water's edge and distant dam,
far below where boat docks dangle
behind houses once just a hop-
out-the-back-door to float off
onto lilt of water and lazy days.

We let the rescue dogs out
to paddle, prance and play.
A sweet, so-damaged Sophie,
black fur glossy in slant light,
circled crazily in shore puddles,
gophers sensed beneath sand,
or so I thought. But no

her savior said. Just forming
and darting after splashes
like a cat chasing its tail,
a long, compulsive dash
carried out everywhere.
Sophie's performance is showy,
forgetting all the days of damage

that brought all of us
to this shore, the old, gone,
way-up-there edge
manmade, too.
Here and now, an afternoon outing,
a pretty lake,
a pretty show.

Undiagnosed

Surely he suffered depression,
I know now, but then
there could have been
no acknowledgment.
The state existed only
as weakness or madness,
and *nesses* not tolerated
in a father's life. Tiny, I fretted
that he felt left out,
silent in our clattery world,
more likely considering
electrical relays, as my mother
learned when he revealed
the cause of his dreamy looks
was not romantic,
as she had hoped.
His garage, his fortress,
every bolt and screw
in neat categories. I still use
the backs of his fountain-penned
cards as chastisement
to my slipshod methods.
Less and less breath
for 20 years slipped past
silently and as smoothly
as his mysterious slide rule
in its scuffed leather case.
The scent, the soft feel
of hook and tab to open,
the hieroglyphics he tried
to translate for me, all symbols

of the silent slipping back
and forth where needed
when a good man suffers
through what will not be noted.

Carol Hamilton has recent and upcoming publications in *Poet Lore*, *Gingerbread House*, *Outrider Review*, *Haight Ashbury Literary Journal*, *Hubbub*, *Blue Unicorn*, *Broad River Review*, *Iodine*, *I-70 Review*, *U.S.1 Worksheet*, *Reed*, *Cold Mountain Review*, *Two Cities Review*, *Albatross*, *Hash*, as well as *Homestead* and others. She was August Poet of the Month on *Songs of Eretz Poetry Review* and has published 17 books: children's novels, legends and poetry, most recently, *Such Deaths* She is a former Poet Laureate of Oklahoma and has been nominated five times for a Pushcart Prize.



Endless Hope by Don Monkerud