

Sitting in the Sun

by Joyce Carile

Outside my kitchen window the apple tree holds tightly to itself. Naked limbs wait for their pores to burst open. Emotions frozen by a bitter cold spew forth with delicate petals.

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Margret got ice cream every day. Like the man with the long beard and rotten teeth, I would look for cast away soda bottles. Instead of doll-size bottles of cheap whiskey, I would get a treasured Good Humor toasted almond or vanilla bar. At summer's end Margaret got hit by a car. With a dime still clutched in her hand she wailed in grief.

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I'm into crocheting granny square Afghans. The repetition is soothing. When I get to the corners of my life and am about to fall I can add two extra stitches and ride smoothly down the next row.

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My collection of marble Easter eggs sit in a straw basket where they snugly nestle on a bed of plastic green grass. I like to sip my morning coffee and stroke their eternal smoothness with my eyes. My granddaughter declares "Grandma Easter is over!" I wait for them to hatch my secret dreams.

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Saturday afternoons my husband and I go to Dunkin Donuts. I am no longer shocked by asking for the senior discount. One time I showed my AARP card for a free do-

nut. Giddy with caffeine and sugar we conspired like two fourth grade best buddies.

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I like to hold a book and feel someone's thoughts. Or play solitaire with real playing card. Experience the breeze and hear the click-click-click as I shuffle. In my hands the world securely sits.

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Today ran away from me on little ant legs. The picnic of a dawning day swept away. Crawling into the cocoon of my bed, I shut my eyes to empty thoughts.

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Crisp autumn night air cleanses my lungs as I look at the moon through the almost naked tree branches. An animal with flashlights in its eyes races across my backyard then into the woods. Dark smoky clouds cover the moon. Hugging myself I quickly turn to the bright warmth of my home.

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Walking down a path at Topsmeade State Forest I saw a baby bird trying to fly off the ground. It would take a running start flapping its little wings until they became a blur of gray against the green grass. The baby bird became airborne an inch off the ground but could not go any higher or sustain this feathered frenzy. The mother bird kept demonstrating while frantically chirping and a sibling did too but to no avail. As I walked away, tears threatened to fall down the broken cliff of my face.

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Sitting on my deck, I am comforted by the warm rays soaking into my skin. A flock of blackbirds twists and turns overhead like taffy being pulled. Colors of the sky and trees so bright that I close my eyes to their timeless beauty. I forgot to punch out at work. I need to balance the checkbook. How I loved to watch the clouds float by when I was a child. Silence all around me purges my brain.

