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## Enmeshed

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## Enmeshed

Late morning, mid-March,  
waiting for your mother  
to come out, you thrum  
the windows down,  
click the engine off,  
and inhale spice  
of evergreen needles twined  
with fertile soil released  
by rise of daffodil blades  
and squirm of earthworms.

A wasp dips under  
the eaves to build  
a papery nest.  
Its buzz joins  
the creaks of your car  
coming to rest  
in air dense with pollen,  
knotted leaves,  
and blooms  
keen to uncurl.

Inside Mom smokes her last  
for hours to come,  
though she vowed to quit  
after Dad's death.  
She will enter the car  
rife with remains  
in her clothes, hair,  
skin--the stink  
of what killed  
your husband too.

But you will greet her,  
touch her arm,  
look into her eyes, gage  
how she's faring--  
the way family  
and friends queried you  
after each loss.  
But even you can't fathom  
living alone at eighty  
after a near sixty year union.

You close your eyes  
to soak in layers  
of birdsong:  
single notes, phrases,  
entire arias  
of varied tempo and timbre;  
recalling Dad,  
his birdfeeders,  
and wars waged  
with squirrels.

At scuffle of leather  
soles on concrete,  
your eyes rise  
to see her shuffle  
forward, swathed  
in pastels, the monarch  
pin you gave her  
piercing a white  
lace sweater draped  
over sloped shoulders.

You turn the key, hum  
the windows closed  
to keep her warm,  
with locks in place;  
watch her burrow  
her way past cracks  
and errant mulch.  
You hold the heady essence  
of hyacinth petal-pods  
and unwind.

**Karen George**, author of *Into the Heartland* (Finishing Line Press, 2011), has been awarded grants from The Kentucky Foundation for Women and Kentucky Arts Council. Her work has appeared in *Memoir, Still, Single Hound, Thumbnail, Vestal Review*, and *Barcelona Review*. She holds an MFA in Writing from Spalding University.