

## Sandwiched in the Storms

by Sonya E. Kiser

In an unrhythmic timpani,  
the storm clouds roll into our lives  
like slowly pouring marbles from a pitcher  
onto a terrazzo floor.

Broken heart.  
Broken bone.  
Broken promise.

Caught between  
the thunderous downpour of  
riotous and rowdy teens  
and  
the antagonizingly set-in drizzle of  
aging parents fighting their mortality.

How do we describe ourselves, this  
sandwich generation?  
Who were we thirty years ago?  
Who will we be twenty years from now?

How do we face our own empty nest, while we  
empty out our parents' possessions,  
as if drawers of old keys, scraps of paper, vintage knick-knacks,  
or discarded Pinewood Derby trophies, baby blankets, childhood toys,  
can bring any of them truly back to us.

Every middle-aged daughter/mom and son/dad  
blusters into this season of life, this hovering between  
the younger and the older.  
There is not much comfort in the common camaraderie.

So how does the self, the named individual,  
remain somewhat identifiable amidst the relationships?

Youngsters develop into happy cumulus clouds  
as adults with careers, houses, spouses,  
often much like we were during the best times of our lives.  
Parents face the coming front, but eventually dissipate, and melt,  
quietly returning to nature's recursive cycle.

One shower - lively and full of happy anticipation.  
The other - hailing steps of pain and resignation.

And we...

We, like gray wisps of fog, cleave to both,  
tentatively sustaining the connections across the divide,  
waiting for the next marble  
to come rolling in with thunder.