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Greg Miller

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Greg Miller

At the Window

White calla lilies gathering like flocks,
gold tongues extended to the glozing sun
outside her kitchen window, she can see
beyond them, in a field of Queen Anne's lace,
her husband, son, and daughter, soapy water
splashing up from the pressure cooker lid
catching her in the corner of one eye
as steam rises from the still running rinse.
Starting to cry almost against herself,
she turns to the porcelain angels on the wall,
each one a wooden step above the next
on a wooden emblem of the crescent moon.
But why should she cry now, she asks herself,
the cancer thriving in her small son's head
removed, the worst of the danger past?
The redbuds burst like barnacles from the bark.

Greg Miller

Heat

His cane in one hand, he
balances against the stone,
his free hand pulling weeds—
 her name, his own
name too cut where he stoops and reads
 the lines,
seeing them joined as they should be.
The stones make a strange sight,
he frets: the head and foot
should be laid square.
 The workmen set
their load down just anywhere—
 twin stones
—hers, his—awkwardly anchored—not right.

He'd almost like to be
with her. A rain crow cries.
The sun glares. Inching down
 —wedged there—he tries
to ease himself against that gown
 of grass,
unmindful that no one will see,

and slips, thrusting his cane
against the base to right
himself. His wrist
 smarts, the tight
nerve needling him where his grip missed
 to toss
him back, furious with the pain,

to stand up straight again,
but still, like them that dream.
Bareheaded in the sun,
 he starts to seem
strange to himself. He walks back, done,
 to pass
his car's bright hood, stop, and get in.