



## Booth

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# Wires that, Usually, We Never Notice

Julie Hanson

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## Wires that, Usually, We Never Notice

### **Abstract**

Richard stopped our car partway  
up our drive and did he  
ever have a puzzled look:  
*why's my wife just standing there,  
exiled and outside?* I pointed in reply  
to the wires running overhead,  
wires that, usually, we never notice,  
and motioned to their juncture with our house  
where a little fire had started.

### **Keywords**

fire, Fourth of July, wires



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## Wires that, Usually, We Never Notice

*by the editors*

by Julie Hanson

Richard stopped our car partway  
up our drive and did he  
ever have a puzzled look:  
*why's my wife just standing there,  
exiled and outside?* I pointed in reply  
to the wires running overhead,  
wires that, usually, we never notice,  
and motioned to their juncture with our house  
where a little fire had started.  
Just one flame, really,  
dancing in place on a wire  
and making no headway whatsoever.  
Nevertheless, the operator  
at 911 had ordered me to  
“get outside” and all this had  
transpired in the flicker of time  
it takes to travel four blocks east,  
buy an o-ring for a hose  
and travel four blocks back.  
Richard waited with me there  
a moment more while first the siren  
and then the firemen arrived.

The three of them stood around  
in their boots and padded coats,  
refusing offers of lemonade  
on a hot and otherwise quiet  
Fourth of July. They'd already  
phoned Alliant, who'd sent a man  
who'd be there any minute.  
I told them how I'd heard the POP  
and come outside. Our neighbor,  
Stan, told everyone he'd seen  
a spark or something near the ground  
out of the corner of his eye.  
Shirley, who must be seventy  
if she's a day, came along from  
three doors down  
and was startled by a fireman  
who yelled at her for running  
underneath the wires.  
Someone pointed out to everyone  
that two lights were on inside.  
That's peculiar, we'd all thought.  
Not only that: the oven,  
air conditioner, and washer  
which had been on, were off.  
So Richard carried the two chickens  
still in the roasting pan  
down to Bruce and Nancy's house  
where we'd planned to eat them  
anyway in a matter of hours.  
For nearly twenty years it's been  
either their house or Richard's and mine  
every Fourth of July.  
We start around six, we eat,  
we catch up on each others' lives.  
We play a board game or croquet,  
and, even in election years,  
Nancy bakes a flag cake.

Julie Hanson has work in recent or forthcoming issues of Cincinnati Review, Volt, Poetry East, The Iowa Review, and Tampa Review. Her awards include the Robert and Adele Schiff poetry prize and a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. She is coordinator of a food buying cooperative in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.



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