

stick to my socks  
and blue Gulf

can rise and fall  
against the shift

and sway and beyond  
the ragged shoreline

I linger to swim  
and dive and the water

is still and warm and  
you are not invited.

### Still

Look at the sky's moon, that  
punch white dot in inky fabric.

And there, in the bright black distance,  
a star, an old one, burning. And there,

a bluish one, flying. I wish for a lot of things  
these days, but most days I never stop stitching

those wishes together, one after another,  
a jack's ladder, a beanstalk, a wide green field.

Bridges, fences, walls. And this is fine. This  
climbing  
past, this unknowable future. Forget all of that.  
But give me this.

Allow the dew to rise onto the beads of the lawn  
plot grass each morning, for the pachysandra  
to slowly row their ivy leaves. As for the saccharine,  
allow the honey, the thick sweet butter, the dramatic  
tragedy of sky, the breathing over there, and here, still.

### Author Bio

Alicia Hoffman lives, writes and teaches in Rochester, New York. She has taken an interest in reading and writing from the moment she learned to remember. Recent poems can be found in online and print journals such as *Oak Bend Review*, *Boston Literary Magazine*, *Redactions*, *elimae*, *Umbrella*, *Writer's Bloc*, *Red Wheelbarrow*, *decomP* and elsewhere. This is her second broadside with Ink Publications. She can be reached at [newyorkcatcher@gmail.com](mailto:newyorkcatcher@gmail.com)

### Artist Bio

Jill Hoffman grew up in the Finger Lakes area and is a working artist in Ithaca, NY. She graduated from The Rochester Institute of Technology with a degree in Illustration with honors. Her artwork has won awards on national levels as well as regional in the Central New York area. She can be reached at [jillhoffman@gmail.com](mailto:jillhoffman@gmail.com). Samples of her work can be found at <http://jillrhoffman.carbonmade.com/>

### **Ink Publications**

301 Elmwood Terrace  
Rochester, New York 14620  
[www.inkpublications.com](http://www.inkpublications.com)

## *Losing*



## *Duende*

*by*

*Alicia Hoffman*

“Intelligence is often the enemy of poetry, because it limits too much, and it elevates the poet to a sharp-edged throne where he forgets that ants could eat him or that a great arsenic lobster could fall suddenly on his head.” ~ Federico Garcia Lorca

### **Losing Duende**

In this yellow photo, your eyes are the fires of late June  
as you watch from your soft throne of Pennsylvania

creek bed, as your bare and muddied feet sink  
beneath a plantation of sand and grit, as cool water

runs between your sandcastle toes,  
indistinguishable  
from the shadows, the minnow silhouettes and rivulets

streaming through wet stone. You were so young,  
firm  
and curved and free to ponder nonsensical ideas as silly

as the syllables in tomorrow, the riddle between  
fishes  
and fish. From this, who could tell you could grow  
old

and sink into stillness. Here, it's as if you could  
forever flit  
about the palette of earth and branch, a gypsy  
laugh

at the ants and the worms and the entire world  
as if they would always be there for the taking.  
Even myths

of a silver creature lurking in the depths of that  
small town  
stream were real to you as unicorn, light-winged  
fairy

sprinkling glitter from a magic wand. But now, the  
sun

has dissolved. Now, the rains come early and  
stayed

too long. And now, it aches in places in your body  
you cannot bear to name, and you are lost, it has  
gone

away and you have called off the searches,  
you have closed the blinds, you have taken the  
clippings

of old papers and placed them between the lines  
of your dresser drawers, and I dare you here,  
instead

of this image of you in younger years, because  
I know inside you will still find that same flamenco  
dance.

### **Gulf Island National Seashore**

This is where I leave,  
where Fort Pickens turns

alabaster, long drives  
towards New Orleans

become smoke and  
mirror memories

of the Rue de Canal  
trolley ride towards

the center of somewhere  
we could get drunk

on mint juleps in a square  
flowering with bougainvillea –

Yes, we are definitely  
past Fort Pickens

when the road turns  
and there is a toll

and no one around and  
I say screw the change

until you are convinced  
you can keep on, go

until the ground  
is not ground

but white sand and  
the hush of distant shore.

Yes – we are somewhere  
between Mississippi

and Florida when  
the Gulf Coast swallows

the night sky, so dark  
we carry a flashlight

to the nearest rush  
of water only to find

it is littered  
with sea crabs, comic

in their sideways scurry,  
the translucence

of shrimp, weird  
lobsters wagging crustacean

tails and I would say  
be careful, they are arsenic,

but you would not  
get the joke, and

this is when I know  
I will stay here, where

North American shore  
meets the Gulf of Mexico,

where home  
is an island

of sand and brush –  
spikes and burrs