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## Mourning Station

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*"And what a congress of stinks! . . . Nothing would give up life: Even the dirt kept breathing a small breath." –Theodore Roethke, "Root Cellar"*

Our house sits in mud, no Pompeii. Nearly everything's awry: the shampoo is wedged in the blinds; the beds lie on their sides; thick water stands in cups, sheetrock droops away from beams. My clothes hang decaying in the bathroom where I left them. What can I tell the volunteers about my grandmother and me that they can't figure out when they excavate the remains?

Adult diapers, hundreds of orange medicine bottles (labels yellowed beneath their dusting of river clay, some bearing her name, some mine), breathing tubes, diaries, *Good Housekeeping*, and browned skeins of yarn spill from closets and litter the floor, all fetid with moisture. Where did she end and I begin? She ended in a home.

I still haven't begun to *dive into the wreck*,  
to dig and dredge myself out of this mourning station.  
The house breathes its last breaths as silverfish visit.  
I can feel the mold spores settling in my lungs,  
trying to claim me as they have claimed this space  
which used to be covered in flakes of her ashy skin.