

# *Voices of Home*



Presented by  
The Rehoboth Beach Writers Guild



# *Voices of Home*

*By Rehoboth Beach Writers Guild Members  
Arranged and Edited by Irene Fick*



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“Oscar’s Red House” © 2012 Fred Dylla

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“after grandma” © 2010 Susan Steele

# Introduction

In September, we put out a challenge to our Guild members: In fifty words or fewer describe what “home” means to you. Forty-seven writers responded. Some of the entries were just a line, others were comprised of carefully rendered lists, others contained pithy quotes. Some were humorous, others lyrical or wise or sad; some were mini-poems in themselves, others flash essays. How, I wondered, was editor Irene Fick going to compile all this into one coherent poem?

All I know is she did.

But to say that Irene Fick edited, arranged, cataloged—words one would typically use to describe her task—is an understatement. She found in each writer’s submission the line,

phrase, or detail, that shone brightest and then deftly, artfully, wove all our glittering fragments into something substantial, meaningful, beautiful, and whole.

At this time of year when we are counting our blessings, I am filled with gratitude for the “second home” that the Writers Guild has become for many of us. How lucky we are to have writers willing to give their time to these group projects. How lucky we are to have visual artists lending us their work to enhance our words. And how lucky, to have at the center of it all, Cindy Hall, who conceived of and managed this project, then found a way to present it in a format that turns it into the Thanksgiving gift we wanted it to be.

*Maribeth Fischer*

RBWG Executive Director







*Pink House*  
*Papier mache, costume jewelry, acrylic paint, various odds and ends (2020)*  
*20" x 30" x 18"*  
*Molly Pauker*





# Voices of Home

*Twist and push the knob, hear the door release  
from the jamb. Now, find those worn slippers,  
bask in the warmth of steaming black tea  
as rain sluices down darkened windows.  
Find the shaft of light in this starless room,  
whisper, "I'm home."*



*Renew  
Wood, silver gilt, flame work glass (2022)  
9" x 6" x 3.5"  
Tim Barton*



## 1. Childhood

Once upon a time, I was a child bathed  
in sunshine, the scent of Balsam pine.  
I romped in freshly cut grass, my boots  
crunching through acres of dirt, swaths  
of wildflowers, dianthus, daisies. Fall  
leaves popped crimson red. I was seeded  
by many mothers, shaded by soft fading  
curtains, shadows of fan blades, warmed  
by line-dried sheets and cotton towels.  
I savored my place at the oak table  
in the cramped kitchen of our rambler.  
Evenings, we held hands for silent grace  
as my father, with an impish grin, declared  
*It's warm in this house.*

How could I know that home would remain  
imprinted in me like my first kiss?

## Playground Earth



Robert Fleming 8/6/2022

*Playground Earth*  
*Computer-generated graphics (2022)*  
*Robert Fleming*



## 11. Mid-Life

Thoughts of home float just beyond  
the surface of memory. Home beckons  
my belated return to the life I left behind.

The garden is now scattered with sweeps  
of climbing clematis, rose bushes in full bloom.  
The trill of the red-winged blackbird calls  
me as I pass the row of rickety old rockers  
on the wrap-around porch, imagine a book  
waits for my hands to grasp it. I close  
my eyes, drop my bags, exhale.

Sun arcs through the windows, bounces  
off glass vases filled with sunflowers.  
Soon, the shadows emerge. *Momma? Why  
are you sitting alone in the dark?*



*Oscar's Red House*  
*White-line woodcut (2012)*  
*Fred Dylla*

But Momma now lives only in family photos  
that line the shelves, in corner cupboard  
keepsakes, in the flickering lights of holidays.

She dwells in her imagined perfect home.  
It glows with the sparkle of a gem, is graced  
with gleaming waxed floorboards, a dining  
table of fine China, crystal stemware, starched  
cloth napkins. She lives in a parlor with ornate  
pocket doors, three-inch crown moldings,  
a curved banister at the base of a grand staircase  
and hand-laid floors installed by the Captain's  
shipwright more than a century ago.

But wait—home was never this. It was the aroma of the woodstove, the crooked garage door's noisy yawn, the rumpled bedrooms with sinking floors. Home was the stack of dirty dishes in the sink, the Formica table where we spooned oatmeal near the cardboard box crammed with ducklings from our seventh-grade science project. Home was the sweet and sublime meow of the kitten, the black cat's fur rubbing against our legs.

Home was the sunrise breakfast of biscuits drizzled with churned butter and hive honey, the whiff of cinnamon in scalded milk wafting up the stairs during winter. Home was the balm of roasting vegetables, olive oil that splashed on the stovetop, some of it landing on the kitchen's limestone floor.



And once a year, home was Momma who emerged  
from the kitchen in her floral apron to present  
the 25-pound turkey served with sausage stuffing,  
hot yeast rolls and cranberry orange chutney.

Once upon a time, before I wandered, home  
meant refuge, love, hope, peaceful rest. Home  
was four walls surrounding all those dear to me.

### III. Late in Life

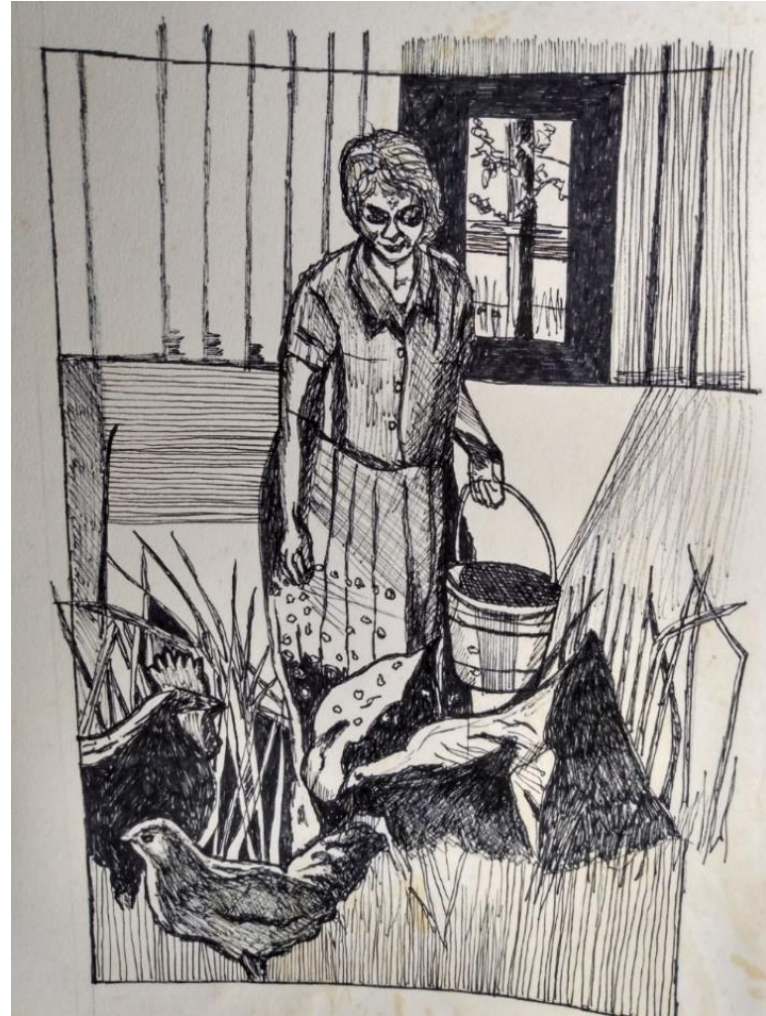
The air is lighter now, the sand softer. This late September shoreline ushers me home to a place not so far away.

Home is where I was born. It is where I now live. Home is what I carry inside me.

Home is a self-created space of welcome. It is the squat stucco walk-to-town house in the Bay area. It is the angular A-frame overlooking Chesapeake sunsets. Home is the chic Paris studio, the Cape Cod in the Berkshire hills, the Indonesian jungle hut. Home is the chaotic shelter, the houseboat, the forgotten trailer park. Home is wood, steel, glass, fiber, stone.

Home is the fragile parent, now the child.  
Home is the aging child, now the parent.

Once upon a time, home was the beloved dog,  
now slower to rise from his bed on the floor,  
gray muzzle low, as if to apologize I caught  
him napping. Sometimes, he descends  
slippery wood steps to greet me. His tail wags  
as if to say *You're home at last. Do you know  
how much I have missed you?*



*after grandma*  
*Pen and Ink (2010)*  
*Susan Steele*

# Contributing Writers

Anonymous  
Bob Angell  
Sarah Barnett  
Patty Perreault Bennett  
Hilary Booker  
Christy Briedis  
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Deanne Coolidge  
Jackson Coppley  
Walt Curran  
Anne Crown Cyr  
Ginny Daly  
Zita Dresner

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Maribeth Fischer  
Robert Fleming  
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Gene Garone  
Deb Griffin  
Annie Groeber  
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