

Margaret Yocom  
Farmington, ME

**On the Path to the Sea, Kennebunkport,  
Late October**

The entire year hangs on the wild beach roses.  
All over the throat-high bushes  
clumps of rosehips sway

some plump, still red and fruited  
some collapsed, leaking  
some dry, leather brown and dreaming of snow.

Along the lawn of the shuttered gray house,  
wild roses stood guard all summer.  
Their green and growing branches, flush with thorns,

flanked the gray gate,  
gave truth to the red-lettered warning: PRIVATE  
All those who slept inside felt the promise—

a summer that would last a hundred years,  
every day, roses, blush pink,  
with a fragrance like forever.

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## **Rafting Up**

*In memory of my father,  
Norman Davidheiser Yocom (1923–2016)*

Four loons float east down the lake  
A fifth surfaces  
Then another, and another.  
One sweeps its neck left, and right

One dips its beak, and dives  
One looks back—the rowan, its red berries  
One hoots to an unseen eighth  
Then another, and another.

We hover around him  
One perches on the windowsill, one on the bed  
One sways side to side in the chair  
One stands on one leg, then the other.

Soon we will dust off our black shoes  
Our black dresses, our suits  
We will fasten white pearls around our necks  
We will stiffen white collars

We will walk down the aisle to the front pew  
We will track each other, glance by glance  
We will sing one song  
Then another, and another.



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## **Swing**

*For Grandfather Isaac Newton Yocom (1885–1978)*  
*of Longview Farm, Douglassville, PA*

The swing, we'd beg him,  
pulling him to the towering catalpa,  
the high bank,  
please, the swing—  
the swirl of it, the flight,  
to leave,  
to rip loose  
from daffodils and green lawn  
hand-laid stone walls  
jersey cows, their mouths filled with clover  
hollyhocks by the gate  
the lane past the chicken coops  
the beehives,  
up into the tree's top leaves  
into summer's impossibly blue sky,  
the reach of it—  
each falling back was only a way  
to fly higher then,  
always knowing his arms were there,  
the constant knotted ropes.