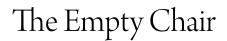
The Prairie Light Review

Volume 37 | Number 1

Article 62

Fall 12-1-2014



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Recommended Citation

Forslin-Bojnansky, Karen F. (2014) "The Empty Chair," *The Prairie Light Review*: Vol. 37: No. 1, Article 62. Available at: http://dc.cod.edu/plr/vol37/iss1/62

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Forslin-Bojnansky: The Empty Chair KAREN F. FORSLIN-BOJNANSKY

(For my beloved sister, Eileen)

THE EMPTY CHAIR

The empty dining room chair where my sister once sat confronts then stares at me waiting

So I sit beside it to avoid its glare and significance maintain my composure

But it demands my attention like a former lover grasps for a hug or a hand unwilling to be ignored

The emptiness prompts family memories recalls the warmth of her smile mutes her hoarse voice and hearty laughter

The chair like her picture hung on a wall a bittersweet reminder

My grief momentarily released again anchors itself to me waiting

My balance wavers eyes moisten I rise and turn away "Mom, let's go out to eat."