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Hometown

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Hometown

This is the city of my impatience,
the city where I heard train whistles
as a call to wander, the city
where I practiced departure and return.
I had hardly learned to walk
when for the first time, tired
of waiting for Mother, I toddled unafraid
up our unpaved street. My small feet
clad in Buster Brown shoes
headed downtown. Just how far
had I gone before my desperate mother
caught up with me, kissed and scolded me,
took my hand so I could not escape her care?

This is this is the city where I slipped
again from the invisible leash
when I was five, while Mother
was distracted with conversation
or commercial transaction. I found
myself alone, stood in front of a bakery
and cried for my lost mother. A stranger
quieted me with a fresh-baked bun,
teaching me the power of tears,
the kindness the world offers a wanderer.

I was content to return for a time
to the nest of my home,
but I had become a fledgling.
Someday I would let the train
take me wherever it went.
Someday I would walk in alien cities.
Someday, I would fly.

Wilda Morris