
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Jody Stewart: Two Poems

Jody Stewart · Sunday, March 8th, 2026

Irina

She is a person calm with vegetables and cats. When a carrot squeaks or an onion shatters, she's always there to pick up the pieces. Her door opens, the garden provides. She pares, chops, blanches — steams, sautés, roasts, and purees. The universe remains kind to her kitchen.

As a child she took calm into her mouth, flicked her fingers to catch its tendril in the schoolyard. She is calm in the raucous and bloody stockyard, at bus terminals, and the registry of motor vehicles. She can embrace a pair of squalling tomcats and wear no scratches. At the street corner when she takes the elbow of the shaky, bleary-eyed man, he is not startled. She eats when she wants, washes up, ruffles the kitten then sits down. Yet her smile is not wide; calm takes all her concentration. She knows it would take just one sharp blade to split open the sky.

*

Braced

What will happen to the small red house?
Its seams are coming apart, stories
all folded up. A tipped wooden table
has been left to rot in mud and snow.

What will happen to this house
in its damp solitude which still holds
an echo in the parlor where Papa
braced a shotgun against his jaw?

The wall behind is not yet healed:
back taxes, cancer, and that voiceless
grown child rolling back and forth
in her thin-wheeled chair.

Come summer, Papa would lift her
into his dented truck, then drive out to see
the *Oreo* cows, a neighbor's sheep

and that blind pony grazing on Joanie's lawn.

What will happen to this small red house,
the split logs out back gone driftwood grey
while the one forsythia,
which flourishes in spring, flails

its yellow flowers against the ramp's tattered railing?

(Featured image from Pexels)

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