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Paradise, Wisconsin

Angela Sorby

Marquette University, angela.sorby@marquette.edu

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Paradise, Wisconsin

Mary Nohl's house is surrounded by flora

and fauna she fashioned from hand-mixed cement.

For years she practiced the art of continuous error,

wrong turns taken so meticulously

they began to form peonies, horses, and trolls,

all cracked and lumpy. Now the vandal's task

is obscure: to ruin ruins, to spray-paint stones

that take gang tags so easily even such small

crimes feel impossible, like flying. And yes,

the cranes come, too, down from Baraboo

to shit all over. When they spread their white wings they fail to resemble angels—

they're too saurian, too clumsy, but as they rise

in the summer dark they knock loose

the abstract idea of heaven, and leave it behind,

like a thug's tooth, in Mary's concrete garden.