

10-1-2013

Paradise, Wisconsin

Angela Sorby

Marquette University, angela.sorby@marquette.edu

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.