

## In the Summer Kitchen

We speared long wooden spoons  
into steaming galvanized tubs  
churning and scooping the checked cotton  
to feed back and forth  
through a wringer  
from her hand to mine.

And there, on that Monday,  
she mentioned Harry, her first born,  
my uncle, who died at three months.  
That was all,  
a slip of the tongue  
as she hastily turned away.

On the stoop by the clothesline  
beyond the screen door,  
she snapped our flattened  
shirts to attention,  
shoulders as straight and squared  
as her chiselled headstone  
I now visit.

That silence.

The dignity of it all.

CAROLYNN HOY