First Born

Claire Bachofner

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/oval

Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation
Bachofner, Claire (2011) "First Born," The Oval: Vol. 4 : Iss. 1 , Article 16.
Available at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/oval/vol4/iss1/16

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Oval by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.
875 days apart,  
we were both born  
on rainy Tuesdays.  
Grandparents rushed across state lines,  
their windshield wipers  
working overtime, cutting paths  
of clear vision,  
they gave us all they knew.  

Grade school woes broke and entered  
ruthless midnight bandits who  
snatched up your secrets  
and spilled them:  
A neighborhood crush here,  
a furious fistfight there  
and, at home,  
we watched a marriage fall apart  
over grilled cheese and tomato soup.  

You took up burdens like bricks,  
shoved them into your Nightrider backpack  
no questions asked—  
  as if they belonged to you  
  as if they were too heavy for me  
  (and they were, thank you).  

It’s hard to say how many  
sand castles and snow angels  
we scattered through time, through seasons-  
soft evidence of a united past  
now sifted, melted, gone.  
Later, we choked down the heavy smoke
of someone’s dad’s cigarettes
and boldly guzzled our dad’s tequila-
straight from Mexico,
went straight to our heads,
there was nothing smooth about
those first stolen highs.

15 years since we harvested sap
from the unsuspecting Maples on
East 5th and 6th.
Dad drilled holes so deep
the trees wept from their cores.
We tapped their sweet veins,
hung silver buckets, two per tree,
all the way around the yard.
We spent months, you and I, gathering
each day’s fill, after school,
into dusk, and, in the end,
only two bottles of syrup
that tasted like gold
and were gone in a flash.