

Estate Sale

MEG EDEN

Jan & Dean have name-tags, matching aprons, & a hot dog stand in the front yard. They're old pros at selling strangers' legacies to Sun City retirees who are all wearing the same salmon shorts, sky blue polos, & corded sunglasses wrapped behind their ears.

The entire house is covered with price stickers: they're on the yellowed refrigerator magnets, newspapers piled by the bed, a hand-crafted box with a sign that says FROM ROME, a greasy half-empty can of WD-40—they're even on the waistbands

of individual pairs of silky beige underwear, all tossed together like salad in a basket on the toilet. High-waisted, worn with pale brown stains on the crotch, lace elastic fringing at the thighs. I look away but can't stop thinking about that pile,

how no one keeps secrets for the dead. When I die, who will be the first to find my underwear? My sanitary napkins under the bathroom sink, the half-used tube of KY jelly on my nightstand? Every day someone dies here. Houses are emptied

only to be refilled & then emptied again. Today I'm alive, & therefore, I buy things. At the living room register, I barter for an old warped record. What do I need a record for, let alone a warped one? Yet I feel like a winner for the twenty cents I've saved.

My grandfather has twelve bikes in his garage. He's eighty-nine & rarely rides these days. Now & then I come & try to help him parse out things for me to sell. When he's gone, someone will have to go through the rest: the rusted bike parts,

RV bolts, and lights from defunct trains—things he could redeem with a wrench & a story, things that even Jan & Dean would take to the dump, not knowing where they've been or what they were when young & full of life.

