Homecoming

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Homecoming

On the late afternoon train
He waited to see his mother again.
Three years at war can change a man
But cannot make him stop missing his mother.

Her letters were frequent but dull like home.
He did not care because they smelled
Like her perfume and the apple pie
She made but could not send.

In the past month she had not written
Or he had not received.
But he knew she'd be waiting.
There was no one else for her to care for anymore.

As he stepped off the afternoon train
He did not find his mother waiting,
Just the old neighbor who
Told him why his mother could not come.

The soldier's mother had died.

--Monica Hopkins

Autumn Wind

I remember she wore red the year she
Just picture it. Red clothes-bleached hair.
That was my Mom. She drove a white Bu.
smoked Pall Mall cigarettes. I was in the
Austin; a God-awful woman who disliked
disliked her.

The invitation for the open house was
R.S.V.P. on the bottom that my Mother ch
by her rules; no one elses.

"Are you going?" I asked her the day
"I'm not sure," she said a cigarette p
fingers with the ash dangerously long. "To
my hair." The peroxide worked miracul
bath towel guaranteeing another week of
hairbrush.

My sister stood darkly in the archwa
should go," she said loudly.

"Why?" my Mother asked with the m
her eyes.

"Because people will stare," my siste
again higher than any of us had a right to
My Mother took a long drag on her c
her cheeks sunken in with effort. "I've de
exhaling long ... fast, "I'm going."

"Fine," my sister said stamping away.
Dinner was quiet; both my sister and
very much. I could hear the changing lea
the window in their whirlwind fury.

My hand stalled on each button as I
house. I practiced the speech I would give
her that she wouldn't fit in with the other
too fast and drink in country bars too mu

I waited for my Mother in the car. F
cigarette blazing a hazy trail towards the
lost my nerve, sitting quietly in the corne