

Editor's Notes

Until I met Crazy Angel's people I never thought a family like that could exist outside a bad sit com. I never thought so much yelling and physical battery could fit into a house the size of theirs. I never thought people really had recliners like that in their houses. So many things I never thought, before Crazy Angel.

—Clarinda Harriss, "Vinyl Recliner"

I am please to introduce Clarinda Harriss as our featured writer in Folio for the special issue on Caregiving and Carework. I first discovered Harriss' eloquent work when I edited *White Ink: An Anthology of Poetry on Mothers and Motherhood* (2007). "Chopped Liver," one of the poems included here, was first published in *White Ink*. Harriss has a way of inviting the reader to think about the world through an incisive use of language. In this series of poems we are brought to the brink of birth, death, mother love, grief, and carework and caregiving conceptualized in unique and fresh ways. "Blood Orange" is a narrative of a mother caring for a son who in turn cares for a son of his own. In "Chopped Liver," the narrator is "her own "mother's/Jewish mother." Memory and the reconstruction of memory that is writing haunts us throughout these poems: "I remember it as plain as if I could remember." "Soup" explores caregiving on a broader scale of contemporary life, through the extended metaphor of starvation. Harris writes: "We live how we can./Whatever kills us, we die of starvation." "Mortmain" is the title poem of Harriss' new collection (2008). In this poem, the mother's ghost is the caretaker of the daughter's house. Also included in Folio is a work of short fiction titled "Vinyl Recliner" about aging, caretaking, and a mother-daughter relationship. Harriss' fiction creates vivid, fascinating characters with vernacular that is appealing and authentic, deeply

moving on emotional levels, while admirably avoiding sentimentality. Best of all, as we encounter in “Vinyl Recliner,” Harriss has the gift of a wry sense of humour that renders the world with empathy and immediacy.

—Rishma Dunlop