

## One Rocking Chair

By Mahalia Solages

I thought ten years of tending, recording idiosyncrasies and love would suffice as a foundation-but here I am, sitting in our garden watching our house crumble waiting for your call. We used to write eloquent letters to each other, remember?

*You* are continuing to flow with the stream and I have been caught, entangled in ficus roots struggling in the muck. Every time I try to duck *and* twist away, something catches-my breath; I must stop for a moment once more and little longer.

*I* look around reminiscing when we put together this weekend project-our little gazebo, the peaceful retreat away from the house. No one else was *allowed*. I planted jasmine, roses, and crotons. I helped map out the circle, you pulled up the grass to lay the thin layer of cement and set up the posts for the thatch roof. We put two fire engine red rocking chairs for our afternoon tea and scones, the comforting ritual we adopted from London, or the glass of rosé we sipped in the summer, an idea from St. Martin, remember?

The ends of the wide armrests have faded, well worn from lazy Sundays and years of habit, now my companion being a tray occupying your seat. This time, comfort has stretched my skin with consumption. Venn diagrams created from the sweat of my glass with every sip have me contemplating their meaning. What is ten years? Why would ten years matter? Another meeting? Really?

The ice is no longer changing the dynamic of my amber hued consolation as the remaining cubes clink against the bottom, waiting to be refilled or sucked on-like me. What would it take me to stay? Ten years of foundation and house building, do I just give it up to her to take so easily now that you have grown with me? Through me? Because of *us*?

What would it take me *to* go? Ten years of foundation and house building, do I give it up so easily or have I already every time I've said it will never happen again, allowing a brick to *fail* the foundation like a risky choice in a game of Jenga.

I sit here having gone from scintillating to vapid, now enervated, rocking on a thin layer coming close to a stop-just as my heart does with your electric touch, still, even though...

Twenty times once, one for two weeks, two months, or two years, does it matter? Your smile is no longer a panacea; your sorry is unconvincing. We've clearly upgraded from the band-aids of flowers, duct tape of jewelry and spas. The sutures of island vacations and full

access to accounts are unraveling with inefficiency.

So, quickly, wipe the tears; plaster a smile from the backyard to the front watching the bus slow down. Hugs, hugs, kisses on tops of heads, a little hand in each of mine.

One day I will decide in which direction we will walk through the door.

(Read italicized words)

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