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## Hippie Hollow

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## Olympians

Molly Boyce

proud friends, one woman  
imitate wild duck waddles  
schlepping across shining  
satin sheets of tiled water  
under cleansing waterfalls

disrobed copper-toned bodies  
molted shades, mauve into deft blue,  
exposed by time and space,  
inches away from their finest hour  
or destined great despair

they take their mount, toes grasp edge  
eyes steadied on eastern sun  
stretch high above exalted heads  
ascend skyward, body spirals uncoil  
into the rippling tide below



**Hippie Hollow** Carissa Battaile

## A Soldier's Tree

Betsy Giron

In 2005, a soldier left his family for a tour of duty in Baghdad, Iraq, and I inherited the new position as caretaker of his Tree. That soldier is my husband, Jason, and this is the story of the day I began a relationship with the Tree in our front yard. Until that day, it was a relationship I kept at a distance, viewed only from a window and passed by on the front walk.

The Tree began its roots in our family as a gift to us, one that my mother-in-law ordered from a catalogue. We received the gift in a long, narrow box which we opened with interest only to find a four-foot long, leafless, twig. The diameter of the twig was about one and a half inches at its thickest section. As I carefully took it out of the package, the thought occurred to me that I was grateful this gift did not come from my mother! Its pathetic appearance left me doubting its future.

The twig, however, disproved my lack of faith after my husband planted it. Within four years, the twig grew to nearly 30 feet in height with a one-and-a-half foot diameter trunk. I christened it, "the Tree." It was a stunning, willow-type, hybrid and the tallest tree on our street. Neighbors frequently complimented on its appearance. My husband, having always been the sole caretaker of our yard, received these compliments with moderate pride—and rightly so. I never touched yard work. I did not know, nor did I care to know, anything about it. The yard was my husband's territory, and my allergy-ridden immune system happily relinquished yard work to him.

All this changed, however, when my husband was deployed to Iraq for active duty. Before going, he gave me my orders, to care for his yard. He showed me how to use the lawn mower, weed-eater, edger, and sprinkler