

GRANT CLAUSER

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Sick House  
*Charleston, 1891*

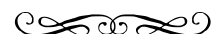
Salt air washes across the battery  
into the foyer, now draped with sheets  
to catch the family breath.

How I long for the marshes,  
the slow suck at my boots  
in the muck and the scurry of crabs  
after shattered oysters on the dock.

The house has fever strong  
as tides pulling against us.  
Sarah sweats red into night  
and dreams of sunken ships.

They dare not bury Emily  
in the Baptist churchyard  
for fear she'll enter the water.  
She lays in state in the parlor  
two weeks now, heaped in lavender.

And I can barely stand to make the tea.  
Thistle root for fever, chamomile for sleep,  
mustard on the chest to cool the heart.  
We are ghosts before we die,  
drifting through dark rooms,  
fainting into dreams, passing  
the host over our lips.



## ABOUT GRANT CLAUSER

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Grant Clauser is the author of *The Trouble with Rivers* (FootHills Publishing 2012). He is currently collaborating on a fine art/poetry book with wildlife illustrator Jason Borger. His poems have appeared in *The Literary Review*, *Painted Bride Quarterly*, *The Cortland Review*, *The Sow's Ear Poetry Review*, and elsewhere. His interviews with other poets have appeared in the *Schuylkill Valley Journal* and *The American Poetry Review*. He received an MFA from Bowling Green State University and currently lives in Pennsylvania. He teaches poetry writing at Philadelphia's Musehouse and blogs at [unIambic.com](http://unIambic.com).

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