

LAURA L. HANSEN

Leaving Instructions

Go now and pick the tomatoes from the garden.
The late September rain has chilled them to the bone.

There will be no more warming sun to ripen them.
We will eat them green and blessed by this last long wash of rain.

In the garden beds, the zinnia heads are turning brown,
but the parsley still abounds on springy bright green stalks.

All that is not picked will soften and drop
and we will put our garden calloused hands to rest.

The raised beds will fallow over winter looking
like outsized coffins in the snowbound yard.

Only the rabbits and squirrels, a handful of hardy birds,
and a feral cat or two will dig in the dirt

and detritus from now until spring.
I am gone away but will be home soon.

My garden gloves are on the table.
My straw hat hangs by the door.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Laura L. Hansen is the author of *Deja Vu* (Finishing Line Press 2017), *Midnight River* (N.F.S.P.S. Press 2016), and *Why I Keep Rabbits* (2010). Her work has appeared in *The Talking Stick* and *Aqueous Magazine*, as well as the anthologies *Fog and Woodsmoke: Behind the Image* and *The Heart of All That Is: Reflections on Home*. She is the founder of the Great River Writers group, organizes public readings by Great River Writers, and offers poetry and freewriting workshops at a variety of venues. A former independent bookseller, she currently works at her local library in Little Falls, Minnesota. Online at www.riverpoethansen.com.

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