My Father's Walnut Tree

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My Father's Walnut Tree
Kristi L. LeTiford

Grows high above the garage roof,
I can see it through the kitchen window.
My daughter comes into view
Lugging a five gallon bucket of nuts.
Grandpa pays her twenty-five cents
For each pailful.
She lets the door slam
As she enters the kitchen.
She wants to know why
She has to pick up walnuts.
I tell her they preserve memories.
I take her into the basement
And show her two log stumps
That have hardened with age
And from years of pounding.
The tops, though pounded smooth,
Have rounded dents.
I take a walnut and place it
Into one of the smooth dents.
I crack it with a hammer
And tell her of my memories:
Of my brother and I picking up the walnuts
Every fall from the driveway where the cars
Shucked the green husks from them;
Of spreading the walnuts out to dry:
And of the snow that came,
Drifting around the house
And filling the driveway
While we were safe and warm
By the old wood and coal furnace
in the basement
Sitting next to the log stumps.
Cracking nuts
For special nut bread
That my mother made every year
For Thanksgiving.

Nikki's Choice
Angela C. Williams

In her day Nikki was good
of good that comes only with
and the determination and ten
she got something between her
Nikki was a female jock—
and she was also one of the high
players to be found at the high
mentor, Jenny, helped her with
eye opening, one-on-one
would push and shove Nikki into
Those were the best of times.
She wasn't so good these
way Nikki had gotten old. The
now resembled thick clouds on
face now didn't smile at all, a
hair that was once so striking
Her days of ball playing se
ago. She didn't have her brill
and the hands that once guide
the hoop, the fingers that use
now trembled ever so slightly
Nicole sighed and looked at
Jenny together. She'd alway
from the heart or not play at c
after her tenth-grade year, h
played anyway, but you couldn't
And these days she saw
wasn't funny: she didn't enjoy
just the thought of going outsid
She didn't really have
friends never came around.
She was the last time she saw Jenny.

Nicole looked down at her
she had the best hands any pi
remembered the day she met
high school gym. She also re