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Armistice Day

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Molini: Armistice Day

ARMISTICE DAY

Sally Molini

Near the Smith River, Oregon

Again I'm holding a good hand at
Ellie and Marv's, Coney Island lovers
in their eighties who still shake their
salt and pepper with the dimpled heads
of kewpies. They feed me every Saturday
while we play cards. Ellie gives a jump bid.
Her sister Violet, who sleeps on the sofa
beneath a stag's dusty head, frowns.
"I read somewhere that every day
a thousand vets die," says Marv, passing.
He turns down the sound on the TV, Welk's
dancers wearing orange chiffon. "Maybe I'm
too damn comfortable for my own good."
Down the road at my place, too empty
for its own good, green penicillium grows
on the backs of Blue Boy and Pinkie,
faded aristocrats that came with the house.
I tell Ellie how wallpaper fell last night
to reveal 1923 news. Sleek, hipless
women now lean above my couch selling
raincoats. She says that's the year
she was born and calls it an omen.

We sing a few songs as night
blindfolds another horizon.
Ale bubbles rise to foam.
I feel safe with older people
as if I also had survived the future.
Violet at the Wurlitzer plays
I'll Be Seeing You,
tears in Marv's eyes.