

## from Paragraphs as Gift Baskets 29

*Carolyn Stoloff*

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Spooky, she thinks, a museum at night—  
all those open eyes. A docent raises her  
hand—trickles of people pool, eyes grazing  
a bare woman composed on a chaise longue,  
skin fresh and ripe as when brushed by Titian.  
In earth, decomposed, her bones, and the  
brushes, handmade, and the crafty now-dis-  
jointed digits that held them. Pain a tree stump  
feels in its absent trunk. The tree-hole where  
they'd leave messages. Place at sea where no  
wind blows. In passing, an expressionist drops  
a red foil wrapper on a windrow of moldering  
leaves. The sound of winding a clock at night.  
White-gloved hands of a Mickey Mouse time-  
piece circling to direct traffic again. Spooky,  
she thinks.

## from Paragraphs as Gift Baskets 36

*Carolyn Stoloff*

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Watching towers undulate and crumble in  
the glass facade opposite, he wondered  
where he stood. In the waiting room, riding  
quietly at anchor, his wife. Rippling caterpillar  
of a summer day. Fleeing the heat wave.  
The gift of grass ribbons cool under a tree.  
Foliage overarching the sidewalk harbored  
perfect lime-green pears just beyond reach.  
The intrinsic value of travel. Everyone  
watched the slice of pear ride the knife to his  
mouth. Mug with a bouquet of pens and  
pencils and one stainless steel letter opener.  
In the opening at the end of a city avenue,  
on cloudless days, a Wedgwood blue tower  
without cornice. A pharaoh's oblong beard.  
Selecting a postcard for mummy from  
the wobbly rack in front of the tobacco shop  
under the arcade.