“Say it, no ideas but in things.”

– William Carlos Williams
Where Poetry Hides for Me

1. In pages of unused journals, too pretty to be written in.
2. In the collage of photographs on the refrigerator door.
3. In the emotionless eyes of the Staffordshire dogs.
4. In the pink lamp that sends rose-colored light into the hallway.
5. In the prints of flowers, lined up along the stairs.
6. In the post-Halloween candy wrappers strewn across my bedroom floor.
7. In the moments of comfortable silence when two people are reading.
8. Tucked in dust jackets of old picture books.
9. In the dusty feather boa that frames my mirror.
10. Under the lid of the wicker laundry hamper, never quite on straight.
11. In the hoop skirts and carefully styled hair of my Madame Alexander dolls.
12. In the overfull shelves of my book cases.
13. In my old running shoes.
14. In the old collar of the dog that died.
15. In my collection of boxes, each housing a story.
16. In my blankie that I used to take every-where but now lives on my bed, alone.
17. In my radio—the way my fingers find the right buttons without looking, the way it provides background music as I go to sleep.
Sandy’s Toy Bin

The small red basket
set in the corner
is Sandy’s toy bin.

It’s filled with her stuff—
her rope toy and tennis balls
and squeaky things.

A lot of things hide in that little red basket—
memories of Sandy as a puppy
and memories of her now.

She takes toys out all the time
because they’re hers
but the memories are mine.

—Ashley Sherman
You in your yellow frame with an aquamarine background, your face eaten away by a six-year-old’s brush, the lips first pencil-sketched, then painted ten times larger than the original trace.

Your only ear resembles the peninsula of Florida, with that side of your face as the Gulf of Mexico. Your deep blue iris floats in a sea of pink skin. The eyebrow is etched in your scalp.

But for all that, the artist painted truly. The two thin streaks of hair on either side are yours.

—Kyle Hirsch
When I look at my boots
I picture their timeline of thirty years
and marvel at their condition.
The leather of the finest quality
is as thick and sturdy as any canvas,
the soles impenetrable and rubber hard as rock.
As I examine them I wonder
if my children will picture the timeline I see—
look at them and study them as I do now
and see me as I see my dad.

—Peter Wilde
I slip it onto my finger, 
a perfect circle 
(the circle itself a symbol 
in its continuity, 
its endlessness, 
its connection and relevance to 
everything).
It fits 
although differently than it did years 
ago 
during the phase of signet jewelry 
when it echoed my name— 
an early assurance of who I was.

Now I slip on my fingers 
the years when garnets adorned my 
hands. 
I remember each ring better 
than memory can recall myself 
at that age. 
I treasure garnet as something 
that symbolized me— 
for a time.

The rings of fleeting fads 
that slid on and off my fingers 
until the silver wore off 
make me laugh. 
The Fimo ring, 
the twenty-five-cent painted tin, 
the ring that promised to know my 
mood, 
blend together into an image of hope 
outgrown by the end of the week.

Next I roll between my fingers 
the intricate rings of silver floral. 
Their idealized nature gave me summer 
throughout months of snow, 
a promise 
that a time must come when they’d be 
laid aside, 
paling in comparison to Earth’s genuine 
beauty.

Now I look at my hands 
bereft of silver, gold, tin— 
only hands 
with fingers that provided the 
background 
to rings 
linked together in the chain of a 
lifetime— 
the circles I have made it with this far.

I gather up these pieces of my life. 
I place them in my box of jewels. 
I wait for the next ring to fall into place.

—Anne Atwell-McLeod