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The First Foundation

Mary Buchinger

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The First Foundation

Abstract
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my father's barn, built by German farmers a hundred years
earlier. I would enter its dark on my stomach, feeling
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tossed between timbers thick

Keywords
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by Mary Buchinger

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as two of me. Once within, I'd worm
my arms down to my sides and turn onto my back
to face the knotted and slatted floor above me and study
a portion of a worn tire of the John Deere.
Bandy roosters tip-tapped their way

across the floor looking for stray grain, slipping
a yellow claw now and then down the narrow slits between
planks. With my fingers I'd trace the hatchet gouges
on the fat timbers on each side of me and bits of old
bark that had escaped the ax

and I would stay in that dark place
lying still, listening for creaks, the rasp of wood
against wood, the constant cooing of pigeons
low swoosh of darting swallow wings and imagine
the weight of the whole grey barn

above me. My knee hard up against a foundation boulder
I'd imagine I was that boulder—smooth, cold,
old as the earth—with all that weight above pinning
me down, and make myself stay there, stay, stay—
until I could hardly breathe.

Mary Buchinger's poems have appeared in Cortland Review, RUNES, Slice, The Massachusetts Review, Versal, and other journals. Her collection, Roomful of Sparrows, was a semi-finalist in the New Women's Voices Series. She teaches writing and communication studies at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences in Boston.