

SUE MACLEOD

Where Claudia Lives

(for Claudia Gahlinger)

The air is thick and hot a breeze
has flowers on its breath
speaks for heavy rain late
tonight where Claudia lives
the green picket gate swings from gritty
sidewalk opens into
lawns roll multi
coloured beds
roll down
to the round
church
(saint george's anglican)

in EighteenAndWhenEverAndEver
parasols bloomed on the path past
the hand
shake now some people call it the
gay
church of broken un
broken circles candlelight
vigils cast shadows reach out to
the old Manse is now
Daisy's
rooming house where Claudia lives the green
gate creaks shut behind Claudia carries her
knapsack of books walks her bike walks
through deep secret garden
through window-pane

porch
fresh with vinegar geraniums in clay pots (pink
blossoms) a shovel a hoe someone's black
rubber boots in the corner Claudia hoists her bike
frame to her shoulder her
sneaker feet
tap thin carpet
up the staircase
old and oak and fine
past white wainscotting bold red
flower walls pasted on once by some mad
happy hand
beneath the golden glow of antique ceiling

fixtures Claudia
digs for the key to her room for the giving way
of metal tumblers rolling home
where Claudia lives

on the carpet her
geometry
of white rec tangles her
manuscripts
claim a path off the table past
the fireplace (bricked up years ago)
high ceilings short stories
a novel steeped more than a decade there are
bag lady elders men in bars travelling
women wear magic
blue dresses reach out
reach in for the Goddess their
goddesses
folders of
No and
No and
No and
then at last
Yes We are Pleased to Accept and
then at last
Yes from the Canada
Council in some of the stories

lives Claudia seven six Claudia pre
literate
Claudia
same brown eyes dimples
did not have Yes No Claudia
Wounded She

brushes a strand (grey streaked)
hair from her
forehead on the secret not so secret multi
coloured bed a quilt from someone's
mother imagined or otherWise motherquilt
of flowers red like apples and pink
blossoms where Claudia lives

Sue MacLeod is a part-time women's studies student at Mount Saint Vincent University. This poem is part of her poetry collection in progress, tentatively entitled Angels Doing Monday Wash.