

## [Susan Terris: Three Poems](#) [1]

November 2, 2015 [Featured Poetry](#) [2]

### Joplin Rapture

*May, 23, 2011, 5:34 p.m.*

Big Sister told her boys  
tornadoes only touch down in trailer parks,

but did she see the cows that flew  
or the eighteen-wheeler that steered across

the sky? I didn't. From the clawfoot tub where  
I lay, hunched over her newborn, I

saw nothing. But heard a freight train of wind,  
crack of timber, screech of stone,

as their house funneled up, taking sister,  
husband, their boys, leaving

me, leaving all behind,  
including this unnamed baby girl.



### Princess Camp

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Published on Talking Writing (<https://mail.talkingwriting.com>)

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In every story, my friend Joe Z says, there is  
at least one lie; and as I overhear someone

in the Denver airport say she's sending  
her eight-year-old to Princess Camp,

I think I've picked up the thread of one.  
Princess Camp: manicures, French braids,

silver sandals, the British royal wave.  
I want to bolt from my vinyl seat and ask

this mother: Why not Wonder Woman Camp?  
Bullet-proof bracelets, a lasso, amazing feats....

So where, you ask, is the lie? In the dreams  
of a parent crazed for her girl to inhabit

the shiny kingdom she always lusted for.  
And the girl? Here she is, back from Starbucks

with a bag of Kettle Chips. Her hair is cropped.  
She wears cargo shorts, dragon-tee, Nikes—

compelling boy-girl, stalking proud, as if slung  
on her belt, she already wears the Lasso of Truth.

## When Carlos Came into Class

He stopped and asked his pregnant teacher:  
*Yo, Mrs. W, how's the fetus doing today?*

(This, the same sixteen-year-old who had told  
her to name the baby after *him*—boy or girl.  
No Carla, only Carlos.)

Then, handing her a Tootsie Roll, he said, *Hey...*  
*I always wanted to use fetus in a sentence.*

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### Art Information

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Susan Terris is the author of six books of poetry, fifteen chapbooks, and three artist's books. Her most recent book is *Ghost of Yesterday: New and Selected Poems* (Marsh Hawk Press, 2013). Her journal publications include the *Southern Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Field*, *Journal*, *North American Review*, and *Ploughshares*. She's the editor of *Spillway Magazine*.

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A poem of hers from *Field* appeared in *Pushcart Prize XXXI*. Her chapbook *Memos* was published in 2015 by Omnidawn, and [three of her memo poems](#) [4] were in the Spring 2014 issue of *Talking Writing*. A poem from *Memos* also appeared in *Best American Poetry 2015*.

For more information, visit [Susan Terris's website](#) [5].

*Photo of Susan Terris by Margaretta Mitchell.*

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[4] <http://talkingwriting.com/susan-terris-three-memo-poems>

[5] <http://www.susanterris.com>