

[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>)

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.

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>