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# Poetry by Ellen McGrath Smith



## Therapy

There are things you can assemble, small and temporary, on a table, or on the floor between spread legs, like a child blocking out the adult chaos all around her:

### **Therapy**

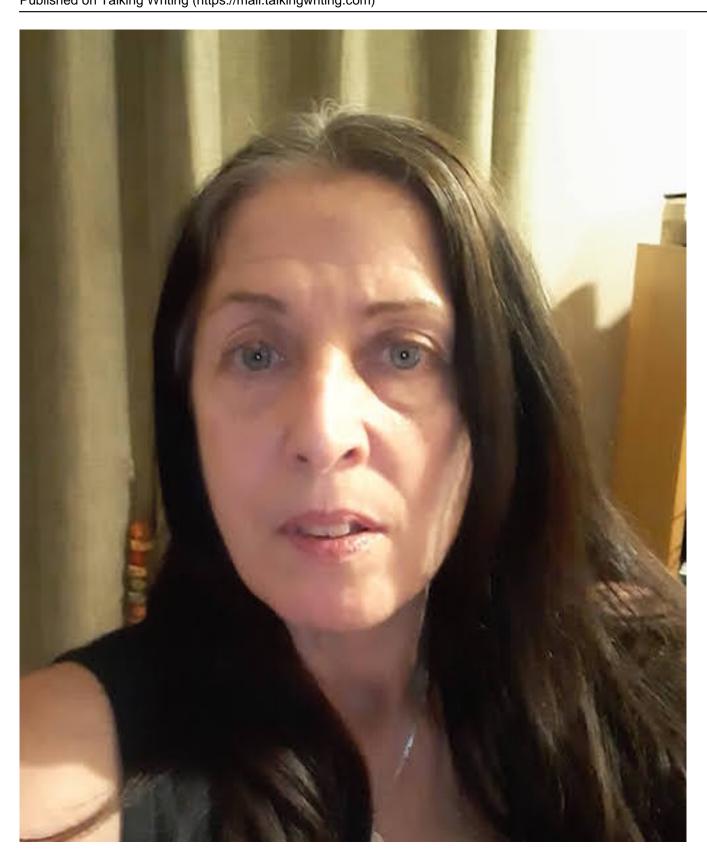
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a silver dollar seedpod near an actual silver dollar, a pine cone on a mirror, a fire lizard dried in its rearing-up position, one green plastic soldier, a tarnished Saint Christopher medal, a stamp steamed off a letter from Japan. Call it a microcosm or just let it stand for as long as it stands, for as long as it takes your attention and care. Move the objects around, scratch out new stories or new endings for the stories you've inherited. The story with a car in a forest at the edge of the world. The story of war, a dragon scorching the earth for miles. The story of the raging father. Seed money, the future, the hair of the dog. None of it is meant to last, especially since it's all made of the past. There's a stream behind your house you've never seen. At night, before you sleep, you hear it.

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### Art Information

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Ellen McGrath Smith teaches at the University of Pittsburgh. Her poetry has appeared in the New York Times, American Poetry Review, Talking Writing, Los Angeles Review, and other journals and anthologies. Her books include Scatter, Feed (Seven Kitchens, 2014) and Nobody's Jackknife (West End Press, 2015).

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