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Nesting

Lorna Van Gilst
Dordt College

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Nesting

Lorna Van Gilst

In the gutter
just beneath my
upstairs window,
soft as mud
in barnyard puddles,
lies a soggy nest
of last year's
leaves.

Ukranian Root Cellar

Lorna Van Gilst

Three weeks I watched you
from my balcony each morning
Carving a little room
in the earth beneath the chestnuts,
Lining your cavern, brick by brick,
sludge-gray mortar oozing thickly out the cracks.
You set two pipes, one taller than the other,
to draw fresh air
over your new potatoes,
then closed the chamber,
sealed it with fresh mounds of soil
tamped down by curious child-feet—
save for a lidded metal square
hinged open to the air
above the ladder.

Proudly you and your neighbors
gathered round,
pleased with your craft,
Celebrating a place prepared
to receive the firstfruits of the land—

Crisp new potatoes rescued from beetle hordes,
Large fingers of carrots, packed in soil,
Bunches of radishes, knuckled and red—

Lined at the root by a jeweled row of jars—
dark red berries to eat with sweet curds,
wrinkled apples swimming in pippy syrup—

Memories of August and June and July
when fresh dill and cilantro graced every plate
with the green riches of your toil—

Summer's holiday at the Black Sea
relinquished for treasures buried in dark soil.