

# “A (Once) Quiet Corner in Her Mind”

By Bree Sheppard

When she was five  
    there was a little village in her head  
And she named it “Happy”  
    because that's how she felt inside  
And the Baker was always up by 7 o'clock  
    and iced red velvet cakes  
And the Policeman wore a shiny badge  
    and waved in the parades  
And the Farmer had a herd of sheep  
    and a flock of chickens, too  
And the Librarian polished the shelves once a week  
    and read aloud picture books  
And the Fireman volunteered for the community  
    and smelled like woodsmoke  
And the people were friendly  
And the streets were quiet  
And the girl felt joyous.

When she was ten  
    there was a growing town in her head  
And she named it “Okay”  
    because that's how she felt inside  
And the Baker slept in till 10 o'clock  
    and burned a few batches of cookies  
And the Policeman wore a blue uniform with a gun  
    and let the school children cross the street  
And the Farmer had a petting zoo  
    and made lots of money  
And the Librarian left dust on the shelves  
    and read cooking magazines  
And the Fireman got another job  
    and smelled like cigarettes  
And the people keep to themselves  
And the streets were busy at rush-hour  
And the girl felt different.

When she was fifteen  
    there was a large city in her head  
And she named it “Crazy”  
    because that's how she felt inside  
And the Baker stayed up till 1 am  
    and was out of breath all the time  
And the Policeman wore a coffee-stained shirt

and parked outside the high school  
And the Farmer sold his land  
and watched it get bulldozed  
And the Librarian left crumbs on the desk  
and read 800 page books  
And the Fireman got laid off  
and smelled like beer  
And the people became Bad or Good  
And the streets were polluted with graffiti  
And the girl felt stressed.

When she was twenty  
there was an enormous country in her head  
And she named it “Nothing”  
because that's how she felt inside  
And the Baker died of a heart attack  
and had a small funeral  
And Policeman became divorced  
and retired shortly after  
And the Farmer moved to somewhere far away  
and never came back  
And the Librarian left old lottery tickets on the floor  
and read online conspiracy theories  
And the Fireman lived in a cardboard box  
and smelled like dirty drugs  
And the people fought wars  
And the streets were destroyed by bombs  
And the girl lost her mind.