

My Brother and I at 58 and 60

karla k. morton

So odd walking into Mom's house
like it was any other day
in any other year but this -

towels in the dryer to be folded,
drapes to be opened.

Cooking bacon;
marveling at this changeling world
outside these chain-linked fences.

How many years fit into one house, one closet,
one memory?

How many unfinished projects
estate-stacked and labeled;

Dad's gloves untouched,
tossed on the work bench,
lunchtime, sixteen years ago.

If we only had one more lifetime
to get it all done,
to tell our children each story:

naming old faces in the tintypes,
showing them the crevasse
where the rocks never hit bottom,

or discovering October 22 -
the date our parents married -
was the same date
you punched out of that F-16
and buried your parachute;

the way you thought about
this very kitchen table -
how Dad's cigarette smoke
always made its way in
through closed windows.

karla k. morton has seventeen books, and is a Foreword Book Award Winner, Indie Book Award Winner, National Wrangler Award Winner, and Spur Award Winner. Her *"The National Parks: A Century of Grace"* with fellow Poet Laureate and co-writer Alan "Bones" Birkelbach is the only poetry book written in-situ from all 62 (now 63) National Parks, and they give a percentage of royalties back to the Parks. Her book/CD *Santa Fe Trail: Chasing the Big West* (Madville Publishing) is a collaboration with poems by morton and Birkelbach, art by Bob Boze Bell, and a CD of nine poems put to music by singer/songwriter Michael Martin Murphey. Morton's work has been published by such journals as *American Life in Poetry*, *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *the Southern Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *Arkansas Review*, *Comstock Review* and *New Ohio Review*. She's the 2010 Texas State Poet Laureate, and a nominee for the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame.