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Foreword Review POETRY

Philomath

Devon Walker-Figueroa
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Devon Walker-Figueroa is a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop and a recipient of the New England Review's Emerging Writer Award. Her work has been been published in *Ploughshares*, *The Harvard Advocate*, *The Nation*, *New England Review*, *American Poetry Review*, and elsewhere. *Philomath* was a winner of the 2020 National Poetry Series.

> *My Father's House*
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> *After hitchhiking many miles to my father's house, I asked for a glass of water. He told me it was safe here. I have killed all the pests, all of the rats and the flickers and those iridescent beetles that used to move through the sky like a glittering rain cloud, he said. He handed me a glass of his perfect well water and informed me I would never find the like in the city. I nodded. The water was warm and smelled like soil. It tasted like nothing at all. I asked my father how he was making do and when he pretended not to hear me I asked him if he had a cube of ice. Help yourself, he said. Feeling grown up, I opened the freezer and reached inside. But there was no ice. Only an ancient piece of wedding cake and my first pet cat sealed in a plastic bag. I opened the bag and ran my fingers through the rigid hair. Each notch in the spine felt like an angry knuckle. I could stay awhile, if you'd like, I said. But he was looking out the window at his freshly mowed fields, taking account of his labors.*

MATT SUTHERLAND (July / August 2021)

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