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## How Then Shall We Live?

### 1. The Options

Escape with serial sex  
or exercise, a lot.

Join while you can the Cult  
of the Child. Get lit  
on drugs or booze or religion  
(for west-coasters, Eastern).

Play the house-trading-up game:  
decorate, renovate, re-decorate,  
roll again. Volunteer to bake,  
or bend flower stems

in a glass bowl. Join a cabal  
that hikes or reads Classics.

Divorce. Kill yourself  
in a way that leaves the least mess.

## 2. Couldn't She Just

*with a line by Sylvia Plath*

The options, so far, not good. Suicide?  
No, perfection may not have children,  
but she has three. Divorce?  
No, she still loves her husband. Divest  
her spousal share? See divorce, *ibid*.  
Could it be possibly be less all-or-none  
than she'd assumed? Might small acts  
accumulate? Couldn't she just—downsize?  
Give stuff away? Grow something,  
read more, watch less TV?  
Remind herself there are other zip codes?  
—love her family in situ and not  
how she'd planned they'd be?  
Couldn't she just love her family?

## Solution

*The solution of the problem of life is seen in the vanishing of the problem.*  
—Wittgenstein

You lay a life-sized doll  
in my arms  
as I tried to hold you high  
enough to keep  
your heels from hitting  
each tread  
on the way upstairs.

It took me years to learn  
the lack of utility  
of this exercise. But I did,

life being  
progressive and fatal  
and love  
its co-morbid disease.

## Elegy

The Cooper's Hawk perched high in our hemlock  
the week your mother died.

She was out of scale, so much so we thought eagle,  
or owl. The bird book taught us our error,

and how to know her again: an eye red with rage,  
wings taut in a glide

inscribing the sharp shape of ache against blue sky,  
and her high cry—

*kyeer! kyeeer! kyeeer!*

icicle-anguished and clear. She had a mate once, she  
had a nest somewhere—near here—

Rebecca Foust

Rebecca Foust's most recent book, *Paradise Drive*, won the 2015 Press 53 Award for Poetry. Foust was the 2014 Dartmouth Poet in Residence and is the recipient of fellowships from the Frost Place and the MacDowell Colony. New poems are in the *Hudson Review*, *Massachusetts Review*, and *Mid-American Review*, among others.