

Standing Under the Pivot

Elizabeth J. Colen

Goodbye iron, hello cat. They said,
a return to the gold standard is what we need.

A tattered game board, fraying at creases. Greece continues
austerity measures, and Virginia worries over monetary collapse,
hyper inflation, the complete loss in confidence of paper money.
The what-if?

The pieces have been the same since 1935.
The bird was banded in 1956.

My sister sits in her big brick home, built in 2002,
watching her children stack army men into orgies of green.

“We must reduce the workforce in a compassionate way.”

What town did you grow up in? Guns. The Boy Scouts find
that they are no longer relevant. The bank fills with housewives.

The postman rubs Tiger Balm on his calves. Does stretches on Saturdays.
The house stands in shade.

Amish-on-Amish violence. With clippers and mane scissors.
To those who don't believe:

a shaved beard. A knife to suspenders.

There is nothing like shame. Nothing
like bullion. Gold standard. A violence.

The iron, dog, and top hat.
Bricks in the fortress.

Amish hate crime, conspiracy charges. Let's look into
alternatives, what the constitution allows. Gold standard.

"We are terrorized by hair cutting attacks." Everyone agrees
death is much more likely in a house with a gun.

The Laysan albatross is thought to be 62 years old.

A house with steep stairs. A house with no handrail.
My sister has a nanny who speaks no English.

She hatched a new chick, healthy.
No more creases and angles.

They will be bilingual she says,
as if this is the reason. They ironed it out.

The new feline will arrive by fall.

My sister's children attend a day care in Fairfax run by granddaughters
of the daughters of the DAR.

The iron is out.
My sister's floor is spotless.

It doesn't matter, he said.
They are no longer relevant.

My sister's husband builds history in a building
with blacked-out windows on the ground floor.

The guy on the horse always wins; everybody knows that.

He's heavy into espionage. Nests in the same spot.
But the horse is also retired.

The Midway atoll. Espionage, spy stuff.
But we haven't defined terms. The voting was heavy.

There's these open tunings,
and when she does a downstroke—

My sister says hush on the phone.

Every six months he grows a beard. So charming it can't be stopped.
The voting was heavy. Corporate America stepped in.

—fills out the room with this warm bass feeling.

And is gone so long the children forget him. Hold them down,
electric clippers. Then the voting.

My sister says hush when I ask about anything.
What world are we living in? I ask. I think it's this one.

A man named Samuel Mullet. No wonder.

The voting for helicopter, guitar, robot. Where are we living?

And government workers at the state level signed contracts
that said they would back any move to secede.

What future? And the neighbors still reference the reclamation,
reconstruction, *Federalist* papers. A man hammers a hook into a barn wall.

My sister's brick house. There were sponsors for some, but not the lesser ones.
An alternative to any lack of control.

No heavy-hitter hopped on board for the iron.

Does anyone iron anymore? A death is much more likely
in a house with a gun. More talk of cutting Saturday service.

The Postmaster is a friend to no one. A death is much more likely.

Give me paper towels,
or give me a restroom door I can exit without having to use my hands.

Elizabeth J. Colen is the author of poetry collections *Money for Sunsets* and *Waiting Up for the End of the World*, flash-fiction collection *Dear Mother Monster, Dear Daughter Mistake*, and long poem/lyric essay hybrid *The Green Condition*. She also serves as editor of Jaded Ibis Press's Bowerbird series.