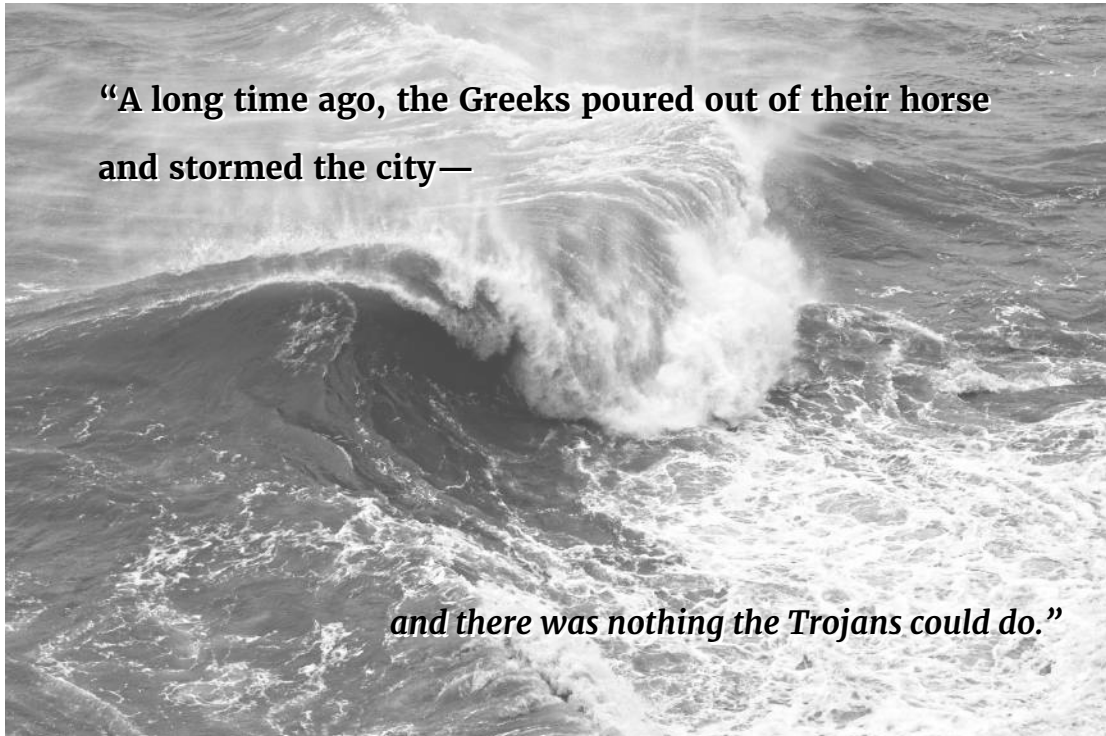


Another Earnest Postcard

Eleanor Boudreau



I wanted to have you and be rid of you, Dear Earnest. Like a postcard inside an envelope, I wanted it both ways, but I wasn't messing around.

All day long the children walked back and forth across the ice, the one we call Rachel and the one we call Pickle. I walked across the ice as well, and I didn't break it.

Rachel held a lead rope, and Pickle pulled her sled-like through the driveway. "I got snow down my pants," Rachel said. I wasn't messing around.

Back inside, Pickle shows me a piece of ice. "It is a scared piece of ice, Eleanor," she says. There is a crack the shape of a 6 or a tadpole, I can see through the ice to her palm.

There is no delicate way to put this, Pick—
What happened to your gloves?

What else can I tell you? What else is true?
The child I did not have belonged to you.