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Self Portrait Through Objects

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“Self Portrait Through Objects”
by Katie Wynkoop

The Mousetrap

I was in the kitchen, and saw my cat with a mouse in her mouth.

Everyone else was in the living room. I heard my mother’s laughter. My cousin yelled, “Stophe! Come in here!” and so I did.

Everyone applauded when I entered the room. “Bravo!” they said, and lit the candles of a cake. My family knows that I love cake. My father said, “Congratulations! I’m so happy for you.” I searched for a smile. I could not find it.

My family was happy for me because I had just published my first story in a magazine. A magazine called *The New Yorker*.

The story was about my family, about how all of them, my mother, my father, my brothers, my cousins, all of them are authors, and about how they throw a huge party whenever one of us is first published. The story had a passage: “If this story is published, my family will throw me a party. I do not want that. If this story is published, I will enter a world from which there is no escape. There is no author in the world who says, ‘I am finished. My works are complete.’ If I enter the world of literature, I shall be its slave forever.”

But I wrote that I did not have a choice. I wrote, “I come to literature as a mouse comes to a cat.”

I think that perhaps my family, those active authors, those busy authors, never did read my story.