

# Remembering Osler House

by Barbara Lane

Screams echo down the hallway of my mind, as they did the cells  
and hallways of that house of endless horrors, through the years.

My body still remembers all the shame of what I witnessed,  
And the corrosive, all-pervasive acid-urine smell of fears.

*I was thirteen years.*

The sobbing, wailing background noise that ate away the night;  
The soul-shattering, too-sudden... cessation of the screams,  
These joined the tortured memories I buried in the abyss,  
To carve away my childhood, brutally, as they stole my dreams.

*I was only thirteen.*

The milling, naked bodies in the showers with no doors;  
The excrement and sanitary pads, my first time, on the floors.  
Betrayed by my own government, the state that had my care,  
In an adult asylum for the criminally insane; I'd pulled out all my hair.

*I was only a child.*

Hollow-eyed people, shock-treatment blank, helpless,  
And no longer knowing their names;  
The intellectually disabled and terrified children  
Still haunt in their drugged, bruised and bare-naked shame.

*I was thirteen years old.*

# Ode to Anne Wallace

by Barbara Lane

Bats flew up from the eaves,  
Fleeting fears from my mind,  
As your truth-seeking eyes  
Snapped a photo, gently kind,  
Artist eyes, deeply watching,  
Vision-ready to explore  
Secret darkness, hidden pieces,  
Locked behind closed doors.  
Drifting boat upon the water,  
Moving beauty all can see,  
Full of strong surviving women—  
“Thanks for painting us free.”  
Talent honed, spirit soaring,  
For justice needs its day,  
The artist paints the history  
They don’t want us to say.