

# Poetry Porch: Poetry

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## **The Mouse Nesting in Our Grill**

By Carla Schwartz

On the vacant bed of iron slats  
blackened with years-long use  
caked in rancid fat  
drippings from bygone steaks,  
the grill tools stored in plastic—  
perfect for the mouse to shred  
and form a mattress for her brood—  
she's gathered bits of drying grass  
crisp oak leaves and tangles  
of my hair discarded at the shower  
all for cover, even though  
each day as one blurs with the other  
she shelters there lodged in darkness  
with her pups—eight of them—  
curled and pink nursing at her teats  
until one day I lift up the cover  
expose the nest to the morning sun  
surprising both of us—  
her blissful rest turns  
panicked escape  
for the mouse and all her babes—  
as many as can cling to her legs  
with one balled up dangling  
from her mouth