

FINLANDIA

Ellie Sawatzky

Two shots of Patrón as I leave
for Lisa's Mormon family
Christmas party. In her pink

kitchen, I drink root beer,
eat Amish fruitcake, and meet
her new husband,

a missionary. Married
over the summer
in Joseph Smith's white

phallus. I've been scared
to see her since the wedding,
afraid to find her pious,

wifely. But she's the same
sweet girl in granny glasses.
A family friend leans across

the granite countertop,
tells me his opinion of
"the homosexual situation."

My hot palms, tequila-scented
sweat. Lisa, in the corner,
opens the black casket

t

of our friendship. The sad
sour smell of mildewed velour,
neglected brass, musk

of a high school music room.
Those days we watched our faces thin
and fatten in our trombones'

yellow metal, playing "Take Five"
and "Fly Me to the Moon."
Now, "Finlandia,"

a song from an old workbook.
"It's really a hymn,"
her dad says, "Be Still My Soul."

"Finlandia," Lisa says, and we play
slowly, badly, dumbing
down to the same

off-key. We've always found
this neutral ground, never
speaking of God. Collecting

Freckle Pelt and Treeflute lichen
for fairies, a stick and a rock
for a unicorn skull. We both believed

Poetry

in tulip bulbs, guerrilla
gardening on our high school's
front lawn. And trombone—

its potential to weep
or bellow. When the song
ends, we pull back,

smiling, touching
our swollen mouths. Shy,
as if we'd been kissing.