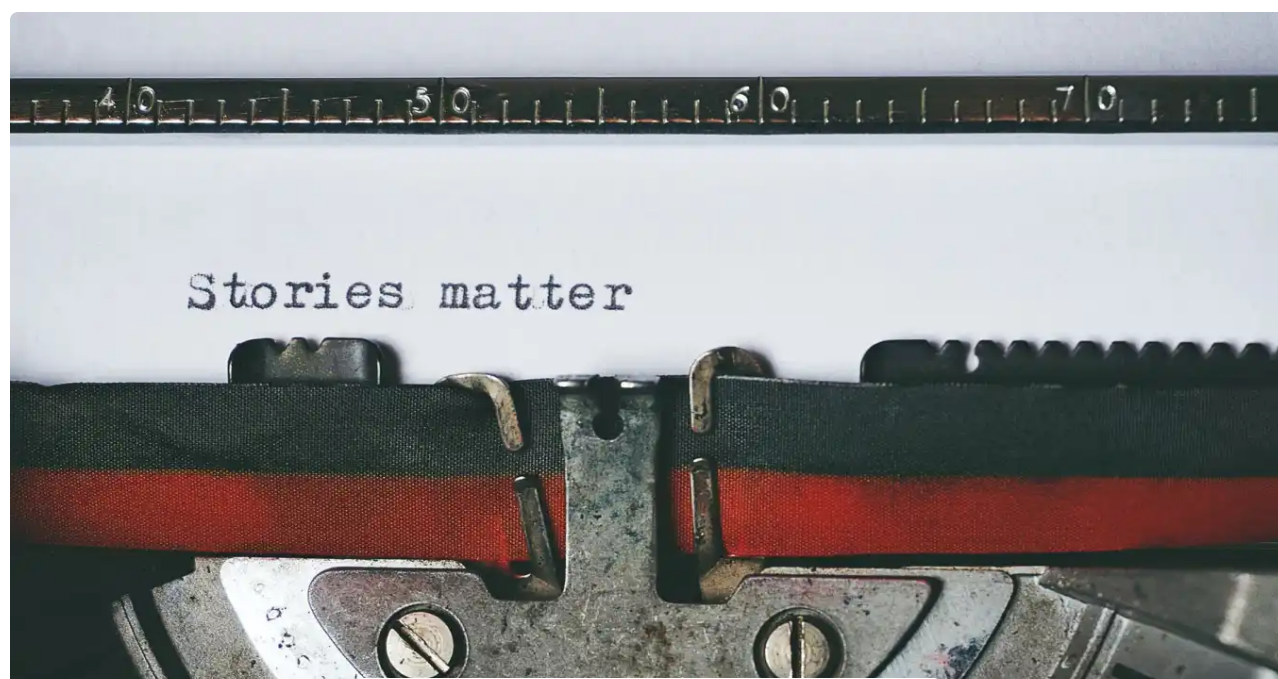




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What remains after the walls are stripped bare before the whole house is painted after thirty years

1 JULY 2026 / EDITOR

Poetry by Susan Hodara

The nails that held the artwork

The holes left by nails that once held different artwork

The chipped plaster wounds around nails improperly but relentlessly
pounded in

The narrow strips of glue that ensured the tiny print wouldn't fall off the wall
that now won't come off the wall themselves

The never-resealed square opening in the basement stairwell where my
husband had to cut through to retrieve a dropped wire, forgotten until the
vintage metal Ambre Solaire advertising sign was removed

The thumbtack in the window frame where I dangled a ceramic angel

The cracks that slash from floor to ceiling

The crumbling plaster that has broken through the paint on the lower corners
of so many windows

The yellow brush-stroked circle with yellow rays that my then-teenaged

.....

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The stinkbugs that congregated, then died, along the top edge of the window
in our bedroom

The phone jacks emitting wires that no longer lead anywhere

The dust that clings to the backs of bookshelves and paintings and dressers
and furs the walls and moldings behind them, like dirty gray clouds

Susan Hodara is a memoirist, journalist, and teacher. Her work has been published in *The New York Times* and assorted literary journals. She has taught memoir writing for nearly two decades. She is co-author of *Still Here Thinking of You: A Second Chance With Our Mothers* (Big Table Publishing, 2013). Read more at susanhodara.com.

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