

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Glimpses of Forgotten Memories:

The Elizabeth Bishop House in Great Village, Nova Scotia

The *Glimpses of Forgotten Memories* is a collaborative photography project undertaken by Kathleen Flanagan and Roxanne Smith and exhibited at ViewPoint Gallery in July 2019. Using individual perspectives and distinctively different photographic styles, Roxanne and Kathleen created photographs of the Elizabeth Bishop House, located in Great Village, Nova Scotia. It is the childhood home of the acclaimed 20th century American poet, Elizabeth Bishop, who was a Pulitzer Prize winner and Poet Laureate.

The images depict a home that reverberates with emotions and half-forgotten memories. Visitors seem to catch glimpses of vanishing figures whose lives are fraught with tragedy and sadness, yet are also lifted by love and joy. The Elizabeth Bishop House is like many others in rural Nova Scotia, located in small villages across the province. Once vibrant and full of life, the house is now occupied by ghosts, eager to share their memories.

Using different photographic styles and traditions, Roxanne and I drew on our separate perspectives to create a multi-layered, nuanced conversation about the intersection of presence, absence, memory, and loss, which are also themes in Bishop's poetry.

My photographs endeavour to depict Elizabeth Bishop's childhood home as seen from the perspective of an observant and impressionable child whose gaze is intense and lingering. The photographs evoke Bishop's extended family – her mother, grandparents, and other family members – while the camera records their absence. The light from the large windows reveals patterns and decorative details in the household furnishings – carpet, lace curtain, wallpaper, and linoleum – that are typical of their time and place.

My images also depict a plethora of latches, keys, and other types of fasteners – devices that are used for locking but also for opening. These images allude to hidden secrets, suppressed feelings, and forgotten memories that are unlocked in Bishop's poems.

*Kathleen Flanagan
July 2019*