American Reprieve

Aromas of seared beef and molten cheese marry the acrid tang of charcoal.
My daughter home between college graduation and her own nest searches for perfect turning and timing announces dinner.

My family dines on the deck cross sections of sweet onion crisp between our teeth as meat juices melt into buns slathered with mustard, ketchup, mayo our hands slick as we carry dripping sandwiches mouthward.

It is late September and Indian Summer. Dusk comes early choosing a Maxfield Parish palette the only orange dimming beneath gray coating on coals where my daughter crouches marshmallow on stick squinting in the gathering dark.

I squirrel away the evening in this poem an acorn stored against forethought of winter.

BEVERLY BREEN
Thetford Center, VT