

Praying

I fancy praying
as a dance,
standing on my dad's feet
waltzing
off beat,
like I did as a child.

I suspect praying involves hands.
Two hands folded together.
My own two hands?
Or the finger embrace
of me and another human being?

What composes a prayer?
Is a rainbow gel penned
gratitude letter
a prayer?
If so,
I've licked envelopes,
prayers tucked inside.

Gazing upward,
plucking saturn, mars, Jupiter
from the horizon,
Is that praying
and being answered?

Can you pray if you
don't know what you're looking for?

When
do prayers change
from Santa lists
to unemployment claims
and first therapy sessions?

I've stared
longingly at lips,
silently pleading for a kiss.
I've clutched
at my waist
hoping for the cramps
to go away.
Do these things make me
a sinner?

Was I praying?

Praying is dropping my guard down
like a veil
in a heap on the floor.
A veil from my wedding with the world
where I ran away at the altar.

To pray, is to finally let go,
melting
into the palm
of something greater.

Snow Day

Our footprints map out
this new white world.
A fling—carelessly
flying and falling,
the ground catches us.
I gaze up at the sky,
scratched with barren branches,
so big, big, big
like the ceiling of a snow globe.
The unreachable,
misclassified as infinite.
The earth shimmers like spilled glitter.
We mold the snow into
forts, dams, castles, weaponry, and angels.
And my sister and I are crazy, giddy
unbreakably young,
for one unraveling minute....

Separation

The squeeze of an embrace
backpacks bumping
t-shirts touching
the crisp scent of
new notebooks, autumn, purpose
musty buildings, young life
ramming, crashing
spontaneous singing,

bells of laughter, liquid smiles
when life flowed

Now I sit silently
in my bedroom,
scribbling notes in the margin
of history textbooks
as they're being written.
The news plays on the TV
like live action museum paintings.
What is more deadly and potent—
fear or ignorance?
Daffodils turn to marigolds,
heat plasters then unpeels itself,
light waxes and wanes on my walls,
fireflies dance then disappear,
and cicadas that I never listened to before
sing me to sleep.

We were always looking, never seeing
with salty wounds and half empty cups.
I'd like to piece normal
back together, not as a puzzle,
but as a collage
with cutouts
from plague's magazine,
when the world's hourglass
resets its sand.