

The day of Jim's memorial service

by Karah Stokes

the sun spun in the sky forever.

I spun around my garden, daubing blue
in the spaces between the morning glories
onto a piece of wrought iron
that spiraled toward the sky

Where the sun wheeled so high
I didn't know till evening
it was afternoon.

The day of Jim's memorial service
all the Oriental lilies in my yard
opened their faces, stuck out their dragons' tongues,
and burned the air with their perfume.

I opened the trunk of my old Corolla and hefted
clamshells from an ancient creek bed
out into light they had not seen in eons.

The sun condensed itself into a tomato
the size and redness of a penny
It broke off in my hand
and sweetened my mouth.

I thought he'd be here forever,

showing me what I was thinking by seeing it
like the light striking the plate behind the camera,
halo of white hair rising above his face
like the flame above a third eye.

He had no idea how much he gave.

I can't count it, either, even for myself.
Here I am, trying to say it,
writing my first poem in years
Following the remembered rhythm of his voice,
like a child hopping
from one of her father's footsteps
to the next
through the deep snowdrifts
of the white page.