

What You Know

I want to write a happy poem.

I want to write about a boy and his father,
playing catch, the sunset a pungent orange
behind them.

They are playing in the backyard
of their house, a house that they own,
that they won't have to
foreclose on. Both parents have
stable jobs. And the boy's mother is
healthy and lounging on a sun chair,
watching the two of them and she is
smiling, always smiling.

The boy's parents have always had a good marriage,
his father never even looks at other women.

The boy is able to idolize his father.

And they have a beautiful golden retriever, young
and arthritis-free, that chases
the two of them around the backyard.

Dear Reader,

I want to write that poem.

Would you read it?

Dog Years

My toddler brother, Luke,
lays his head

on our new puppy, Daisy.
The pup's black

furred face reflects her
discomfort from the
weight of his head.
But she does not move.

She allows him to lay
his head there. To stay

there. The two of them
close their eyes and rest

on the living room floor.

I want to remember

this moment
and so, I try
to find

a camera, or was it a camera phone? An iPhone?

But when I come back
from looking, Luke,
now nearly grown,

stands alone

in an unfamiliar living room
and Daisy is gone.

Change

The husband and wife dig their trowels
into the soil to plant their seeds.

The couple are expecting
to watch their Aquilegias grow,

to see their bright purple flowers
bloom, and blossom, and flourish.

They have ensured that
the plant has adequate sunlight, water, and healthy soil.

A hardy perennial,
these Aquilegias should be with them for years.

The Aquilegia is commonly called Granny's Bonnet
or by its other common name, Columbine. No.

There is no safety in words.

Trajectory

The father stands with his daughter,
 skipping rocks on their river.
One stone curves, veers to the left,
 and plummets below the surface.
They don't know this is the last time
 they will be here together.

The Last Generation

I sit stuck in our car
on this congested highway, breathing
smog-choked oxygen
through slowly clogging airways,
believing
we are getting nowhere.
My forehead pressed against the steering wheel,
I wonder if I will be one of the final few
to go on a vacation,
to fly on a plane,
to drive a car,
to sleep on a pillow,
to go to school,
to eat regular meals,
to drink clean water.
I shut my eyes
and chew my cheek.

Warmth,
my wife's palm upon mine,
pulling me towards her belly.
"Do you feel that?"
Two faint little kicks.
Reminiscent of a pulse.
My wife smiles at me
and rubs the back of my hand.
I return the smile and try
to think of something
to say, but before I can,
she points towards the road
and I see space
to move forward.