

## Icon Niche<sup>1</sup>

Even on a day as dim  
as this is keen

maples so red  
you flinch,  
rose mallows  
ardent still  
this far  
into  
the fall

Sun flints against  
the Aegean,

ignites the heart  
consumes entire  
chambers

leaves you charred  
and hollow,  
altered.

Wild rock thyme  
crushed in the palm  
still sweet

you left inside a niche  
beside the red pooled wax

at a whitewashed chapel  
very far from home.

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<sup>1</sup> This poem first appeared as a work-in-progress for the Tupelo Press "30/30" poetry-writing marathon, November 2013.

## **CONNECTICUT, AFTER DARK \***

Unerring and brutal  
adapter of the soul

is love. It crackles  
along the axons,

draws us into  
what we crave

and dread.  
Retracts us

toward the pitch  
of our own

essential dark,  
into that cleft

between resisting  
and sure loss.

The dread  
of a tender past

unmarked too late  
and tracked

too soon  
by too many

dawns  
recalling

how she stirred  
as you touched

her, tucking in  
the careful quilt.

She was just asleep,  
her hair still damp

and smelling  
of a bath.

*\* in memory of the children murdered in Newtown, Connecticut – December 14, 2012.*

## At LOW TIDE IN MAINE <sup>2</sup>

Forearms crossed on breasts  
like a burial  
like a swan at takeoff  
like newly naked limbs  
clacking high overhead  
in early winter:

That is the hope I bring to it,  
rereading old poetry,  
resting to think,

discarding shreds  
of language  
moving on...

Like bearing my daughter  
through the frigid murk  
toward an islet  
that seemed closer  
at low tide.

We bob and laugh  
pointing ahead  
through alternating  
flows of ice and milk.

Torn seaweed  
slinks around my leg,  
a tuft of moss  
floats up and sinks

brief ochre blink  
in swirling black.

She swims to catch  
my shoulders  
when she tires.

I trail her as I water walk  
in weightless *pas jetés*  
from rock to rock

like Armstrong  
on the moon,  
each submerged boulder  
slick as albumin.

Wearing my daughter  
like a superhero cape.

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<sup>2</sup> This poem first appeared as a work-in-progress for the Tupelo Press "30/30" poetry-writing marathon, November 2013.