

**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.

There is no safety in words.

## The Thing with Feathers

I lean back against the bus bench,  
snacking on cheese crackers,  
waiting, and watching the crows  
perched up above on power lines,  
singing their cacophonous chorus.

One drops down,  
and lands nearby.  
The bird stares at me with one charcoal colored eye.  
Then the iridescent corvid turns  
and moves with a hop  
closer to me.

I break off a crumb for the crow,  
and toss it to the ground.  
Without a sound, the creature  
cranes their neck, taking the cracker  
swiftly into their Swiss-army-knife beak,  
breaking it further down.  
The two of us stay there eating,  
enjoying the endorphins  
speeding along the synapses  
of our branching brains.

Other crows fly down,  
likely the crow's monogamous mate,  
and children. A family  
referred to as a murder.  
Their broods don't enter their breeding stage  
until around two years of age,  
and often stay  
with their family  
for years to help  
raise their siblings.  
I throw more crumbs  
into the group, watching them  
outmaneuver one another for the food.

I remember racing against my brother and sister  
for the last Eggo waffle in the freezer,  
our three thin little bodies jostling down the stairs.  
My sister succeeding in beating the both of us, only to

share it in the end.

It seems so long ago now that we lived  
in Lodi, cramped  
into one small room of our young parents' two-bedroom  
apartment, wearing clothes with unfashionable holes,  
eating Rice-a-Roni night after night,  
saving up  
dimes and nickels  
to walk to the local Chevron together  
where we'd be watched and followed  
by the employees  
who feared that we poor kids might  
steal something.  
The three of us would  
buy cherry Slurpee's, cheese crackers, jolly ranchers,  
whatever we could get  
for under a few dollars.

I don't see them both more than twice a year now,  
once on Christmas, and again  
on our newest brother's birthday.

A man walks up and yells at the crows.  
They scatter into the air.  
He sits next to me and says,  
"You shouldn't feed them. They'll just come back  
for more." I ignore this familiar stranger and watch  
the crows, all together, flying away.

**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.