

Three Poems: 1- As I was looking straight ahead, 2- Two doors to the left of me, a neighbor, 3- What Clare said to me

As I was looking straight ahead

My dad who is dead but you know how death is how it's not really dead
He visits me and sometimes I know it and sometimes it takes me a while

This last time he was in an old white car
with Virginia tags
He pulled up next to me at the light near the Taco Bell
and did his arm like this for me to roll down my window

If he was here to check on me, I can't say I know
but I knew it was him by the feel of the air
I knew it was him by the shirt he had on

He asked me for directions to 17 North
so we pulled over by the hospital
and I told him it would be simplest
just to turn around and go the other way

which was all we really talked about
but it felt like more, it did
It felt like more

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Two doors to the left of my new house, a neighbor

When I was on the porch I saw a man walking and then he saw me
He said he was looking for his silver cross, that he lost it yesterday
It got tangled in the strap of his oxygen tank
like he was sure it would but he wore that cross anyway

He was down to one lung after cancer took the first one
The chemo was no good, it only made things worse
and he died for five minutes before the doctor brought him back,
saying Five minutes is too long but I have a feeling this time

With his arms stretched out and his eyes open wide, the man told me the rest,
that the dying wasn't so great but right after that was the most wonderful thing,
it was so wonderful, he said, that he couldn't even describe it.
And he stood there so quiet, and breathed

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What Claire said to me

Just as I and my body were about to connect
I realized that I could be in two places at once
Which opened up some possibilities
Then I wondered how my body is able to go along without me
But it does
I've watched it
Sometimes I go back because I fear we'll be found out
As if it's a crime for us to be apart
I didn't know that being in two wasn't for everyone, though,
Till one day
When I said to this girl who I don't see very often,
You know how when you're looking at yourself while you're sleeping?
And the girl said, No, I don't know,
I don't know what you're talking about
So I told her, but that part was not the story,
The story was the part we never got to
Then I was walking with a girl named Claire,
A tall girl from the coast of Georgia
And I said,
Sometimes I feel like springing from my feet and flying the rest of the way,
But then I don't do it because I remember, Wait a minute, I can't fly
That's when Claire said to me,
In that buttery way she talks,
We really limit ourselves, don't we?
I didn't answer her
And we kept walking
But I'm pretty sure some of me stopped
Dead in my tracks