

Swinging into Grief

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If someone had told me that it was just another day
Another day in the scorching heat of Arkansas summer,
I would have believed them.
Or at least I would have wanted to.

Everyone's all-black attire
And the flowers flooding every room
Could have fooled me.
Or at least I would have forced such foolery.

I would have told myself it was mere chance
That we all wore the same color of night.
I would have gone as far as to think it was Mother's Day.
That mama was still here
And loved ones had simply showered her with too much spring.

If I could pretend with foolishness, then I didn't have to contend with fear.

I sat on the swing of Granny Tolley's front porch
With eyes nearly swollen shut, but not so much
That I couldn't stare senselessly into the dead distance.

I sat on that porch swing.

Aimlessly pushing forth with my toes.

Aimlessly leaning back on my heels.

I repeated this motion.
Just the same as the repeated motion
Of the screen door slamming

With every casserole

With every condolence

THE DIAMOND LINE

That wafted into the household.

How many more pats on the hand?

How many *I loved your mother very much?*

How much more could I take?

I wanted to run away.
I wanted the fresh soil of mama's grave

To become embedded 'neath my nails

To become confined in my cuticles

As I clawed my way to her corpse
So that she could scoop me up

And I could lean in

And I could lament

into her bosom.

