

## glass candies

in my grandmother's house on the day after she dies  
I unwrap small red and orange candies from a glass jar.

I line them up on the coffee table in little row.  
red once, orange ones, re ones. rows of six,

little round slivers, their crinkling wrappers  
tied of at each end with a twist.

my father is asleep upstairs, my sister and mother  
gone shopping at the ohio valley mall. what else

is there to do in ohio on the day after the death  
of your grandmother or your mother-in-law?

I make candy formations. square chocolates  
from another glass bowl. another row.

my grandmother collected glasswork—  
round glass decorative places line the ceiling

molding of her dining room. I wonder if anyone  
has ever eaten from them. it is late

afternoon and the house is quiet. outside,  
cars crunch loose gravel on the corner

street and merge onto the highway. they slice  
through the whipped-up air and send

dust and dirt up onto the siding of this house.  
but the sun still cuts the window into four,

the blinds dissecting the small bars  
of light onto the table, the glass, the walls.

quiet reflections turn like globes on faded  
beige and floral wallpaper. I hear another car,

this one closer, deliberate and slow, parking on the curb.  
they're back from shopping, and I want more time.

I go upstairs before I have to face anyone else.  
in the guest room I stand and watch the sun,

not fiery with passion or conviction tonight,  
but soft and feathered, lowering

as if on a careful steady rope. I remember  
childhood and relive: through the window

and onto the roof, my arms around my knees  
like a boy on an unmade bed on Christmas.

I hear the voice from the house carry  
through and move the dusty curtains.

they are talking about my grandmother.  
they share similar stories, tinted with regret

for making fun of her bad hearing, or her way  
of offering and re-offering coffee, forgetting

who'd been given the chance to have a cup—  
I prefer not to talk, but to watch:

at dusk, the abandoned coal chutes  
of the valley look like glorified playground slides

that teeter against the slowly darkening backdrop,  
bent like me in the breeze or the grieving.

dust blows down from the hill in a low cloud  
the sun—a thin sliver, an orange something,

its gleam like light playing on a plastic wrapper—  
rises over a grassy crest, sneaks up on the silhouette

of a water tower, circular and slender,  
and shines at its back as if behind the mood.