

Orange

It is a sunny Saturday morning
and we walk out the door of the house on Ryan Street.

An old house with
a white porch and chipped blue paint that
we all live in, me, Mommy, and Aunty Gail and all
of Aunty's six kids and you, my little
orange-haired second cousin.

We walk down the sidewalk
and look at our shiny quarters we have saved
for today. Strolling all alone, smiling
we plan our purchases from Valley Drugstore.

We open the glass door with the little bell
hanging from a piece of yarn
and we look
at the pink plastic wallet, the shiny
gold necklace, the tiny bouncy balls, and then
the candy. You get lots of little candies
and carry them in a miniature brown grocery bag.
I get a candy bar.

Then we return to our house
everyone's house, and go inside.

The orange shag rug matches your hair.
Running up the spiral stairs we land in the loft.

You jump on top of me with your tiny
body and even though I'm older, I still can't move.
You play Chinese water torture,
tapping, tapping, tapping, until I beg for mercy and then
you lean over me and strategically dangle spit from your
mouth in my face.

We ride our bikes on the sidewalk but you fall off,
"I've been shot in the heart! I've been shot in the heart!"
is the hysterical cry emanating from your warm freckled face.

Your orange hair burns like a glowing ember
in my memory.
Where is my fire now?