

Grandmother Envisions Her Own Death

Helen Walker Jones

A white pillar will glow from the sand as I die.
Those backyard trees will shake their empty pods
against the sky. My moldy body will sink
into its bed, smothered by sinners.
In my red dress, I'll trek upward on Elijah's pearly ladder.
Who says white is the only holy color?

I plan to molt this old yellow skin
like a papery snake, but without venom.
In Paradise, my blue-breasted parakeets
will sing me home. Mother will kiss
my whitened eyes. My soul will glow with fire
until my body's reunion in the first morning.

Mormon will polish his armor. Alma will awaken
speechless, at my feet. At my request,
Moroni will play "The Four Seasons" on his trumpet,
invoking my Delbert to shuffle off his mortal body
on the back row of the Creation Room,
his abandoned flesh white as my eyes.

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