

Churchgoers

Shelley Grose

My brother dumps raw
sugar into his
mouth from a small
plastic tube he hides
in his pocket. Dad's singing
can be heard
even in the front row. I
stare at the Cheerio
on the floor and wonder
if it would be
safe to eat. Church
carpet is holy
so it must not
have germs. Worried
that my mom will
see, I
leave it there.

The clock hands climb
slowly uphill, they drag
like my tired
eyes and my dad's
tired eyes. I nudge
him awake. Next week
I will sit on
the end, suck sugar,
eat holy
Cheerios, and nap outside
of my mother's
view. But this week Stephen beats
me to the end and I,
the smallest, am stuck
between my parents. Her
eyes pinching me reverent. His eyes
unopened, dreaming
until it is
time to sing.

SHELLEY GROSE is finishing a degree in English at Utah Valley State College in Orem. Along with writing poetry and prose, she is a knitting instructor and enjoys traveling, gardening, and cooking.