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.