

José Antonio Rodríguez

Poem in honor of the one-year anniversary of my sister Aleida's death, which is five days away

and which is not really a poem.
But if I call it one, may I be allowed
a small measure of madness? May I
speak of the urn then with its delicate
etchings of leaves, silvered vessel that holds
a fragment of what's left. So small,
it fits in my palm.
Wanted each to have a part of her.
May I speak of this detail:
the one pound bag of shelled pecans –
so many halved hearts – she brought
my parents every time she visited,
because they savored them so,
because she knew they'd never spend
on such an extravagance? May I speak
of the light in the room?
Her hands five days before?
The thinnest fingers. Their stillness.
May I speak of the syringe?
Or would that be too much? Morbid?
I know, I know, people die. Except,
sometimes we don't, like the day before
she died, when my car was totaled
on some nameless street, the other driver
off to the hospital, the wreckage
strapped to the bed of a tow truck,
and me walking away.