

If You Spoke of Paradise

Sarah Puschmann

I would tell you I don't listen to the products of unplanned pregnancies. You would tell me planning is for frauds, for people who don't value important things like static shocks.

I am grateful for the paradise I glimpsed when, as kids, we wrote letters to the devil, asking for specifics about hell, when we stole the poppies from mom's grave because we didn't deserve to see it beautiful.

I never did strut. You were the turkey, the one with stick-on earrings and ethnically inappropriate corn rows. You were going to be a fortune teller but ended up forecasting the weather. Not so far off, really.

If you'd have told me that on the day I turned sixty you would help me reupholster the sofa only to shoot a staple into my thumb, that we would spend the whole day in the ER waiting room trying to recall what we asked the devil in our letters and the blindness that possessed us to ride our bikes to dad's boss's house and drop the letters through his mail slot, I would have laughed in your face. I wouldn't have believed this paradise.