

A Brief List

Sarah Golden

. . . of things I remember from childhood, in a somewhat particular order:

Age 2, almost 3. Eating a bowl of Cheerios. Leaving my house to go stay with my grandmother, while my mother went into labor with my little brother.

Riding in the car to visit my mother and just-born brother. Holding a picture of my mother in my hands. "I'm coming, Mommy."

The hospital room my brother was born in, just down the street from our house. Sitting at the foot of the hospital bed, playing with stuffed animals with a young friend. Asking if I could trade my dog plush for his deer plush. Looking back and realizing that I'm glad he said no. I would have missed that dog.

Looking longingly at the small plastic toys in the grocery checkout aisle, hoping that if I looked sad enough, the cashier would just let me have it for free.

Walking alongside the house with my father. Him telling me that someday I would run off with some boy and wouldn't want to listen to his sage

advice anymore. I didn't think I would then, I still don't think I will now.

Climbing the giant pine in my grandparents' front yard. Reaching the very top with my brother, us both a very unsafe distance from the ground. Scraped arms and knees, coming in covered in sticky pine sap. The sting of the rubbing alcohol to try to get it off.

Waking up crying, because I had a dream that I didn't get a donut and other people did.

Looking longingly at the small dangly keychains and knickknacks by the cash register at our favorite Chinese restaurant. The cashier, our family friend, giving it to me for free. My mom telling me not to do that anymore so they didn't lose money.

My great-grandmother's funeral, when I was very young. It was an open casket; my grandmother pressed her lips to the corpse's forehead.

My neighbor's parakeet, laid to rest in a cardboard box under our back porch. Sometimes I would grab the box and open it up, just to stare at it. My mother eventually buried the box in the side yard, claiming it smelled awful. I hadn't noticed the stench.

Riding in the kiddie-cart at the grocery store. The red plastic with stickers that made it look like a fire engine. I remember the way the little plastic steering wheel felt, how the horn let out a sad squeal at the touch of it. Sticking my head out the front and watching the bigger people go by.

Watching a movie in the theater with my dad, trying not to cry at the bittersweet ending. I wanted to look tough, since it was only a movie anyways.

Stumbling over at a violin recital rehearsal, the world going gray. I'd locked my knees too long. Fumbling to the bathroom and shaking and sniffing for a while. A woman, maybe one of the parents, following me in and checking on me, smiling kindly and offering her sympathy. I don't remember her face, but I remember the apple juice box she gave me. It was heavenly.

Laying on my bed and staring at the wall at night. Seeing the shadows cast from my night-light. I found familiar faces in the uneven paint job and gave them all names. I cried when I switched to the room across the hall and my friends were all covered up with a shelf. I couldn't explain it. It sounded silly to tell anyone.

Sitting in the room with my grandfather, hours after he had passed away. Looking at him, not recognizing his face. Not moving closer to get a better look. My brother reaching out to hold his leathery hand. I couldn't muster up the courage to do the same. Glancing towards the giant pine out front as we headed home.

Sarah Golden is a senior majoring in accounting as well as working towards a creative writing certificate, with plans to pursue her master's of accountancy and CPA after graduation. When she isn't putting yet another hobby or scheduled event onto her metaphorical plate, she is finding inspiration for poetry in everything, rediscovering her love of reading, and desperately wishing there were more hours in the day to get things done.