

# retrouvailles

*Maggie Hoppel*

maybe i'm nine years old. maybe i'm waiting,  
lunchbox zipped, at the corner cafeteria table,  
four foot three chicago mobster in hello kitty  
twinkle toes. maybe i can say door in spanish.  
maybe i tackled a kid twice my height on the mulch,  
and maybe he barely stumbled. maybe i cheat  
at kickball but not on tests. maybe on wednesdays  
i watch aliens on TV. maybe i wrote a poem  
that syllabically required the word "pterosaur"  
be pronounced "puh-terosaur." maybe i'm scared  
of santa. maybe i'm scared of being stabbed  
by some cartoon bandit and the safety scissors  
i left out on the coloring table. maybe i meow  
at the fifth grade girls because i don't have sisters  
and people like animals more than people.  
maybe i hold up the wrong fingers when i pretend  
to smoke a cigarette. maybe the weekend dawn  
is my first secret. maybe i'm the ringleader of  
a code language or a society built on exclusion.  
maybe i never studied for spell bowl one bit,  
not sincerely. maybe i loved the wrong boy.  
maybe the dog bit me and i never told anyone.  
maybe i lay awake with my giraffe sleepytme lite  
and think about what dying feels like, and maybe  
it's grape hyacinths, scentless and swaying  
in the grass. maybe my dad will carry me upstairs  
like the echo of a bride. maybe i'll beg him for one last  
bedtime story before we both drift off into the hayfield.