

Upon Hearing of Your Death

Once again
your wet tongue trailed down my
neck and your shaking hands
fumbled
at my coat zipper
and my ten-year-old
face burned hot
as my head and stomach

turned. Inside, for
so many years,
I found myself
in the cemetery,
drenching your gravestone
with my spit,
gnashing my teeth
ripping up the sod
and pissing on your coffin.

But then
in the moment when
the echoes
died,
I drew myself up
to face the ghost
and stared
into empty space.

• *Juliette Nehring*