

### **Rosary Beads**

I do not know the rosary, yet I have rosary beads.  
They are made of wood and smell like warm cedar  
mixed with the delicately lotioned skin of an elderly  
woman's soft hands  
those of my grandmother, who held these beads tight.  
Towards the end we would find her  
blind and incoherent  
sitting in the hallway  
at 2:30 a.m.  
Who will come and find me  
now that I cling to these beads?

I understand the emptiness she felt on those lost nights,  
share her loneliness.  
Praying to my grandmother's soul to show me how to live,  
I am left with the smell of gentleness, in cedar and soft  
lotioned hands  
wiping away my salty tears, telling me it's okay.

I believe now is the time to learn the rosary.

*Chris Burkhardt*