

RISHMA DUNLOP

## Adagio

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When father dies,  
mother packs up the moon and stars.  
She commits to the task of grief,  
paces the half-dreamt rooms,  
continues to punch the clock at the public library  
lost in books and sounds  
of silence.

Outside in the garden of flowers  
father named, spring's plaque of blooms,  
maimed birches.  
I clip rain-battered stalks  
of white lilacs and iris.  
I climb a tree like I did as a girl.  
Perched in the weeping willow,  
I dream of waking  
in the wood of true stories.

Meanwhile, in the rubble  
of the burned library in Sarajevo,  
the cellist plays Albinoni's "Adagio in G Minor"  
for twenty-two days, for twenty-two  
killed waiting in a breadline.

The scroll of his cello  
is a fist shaken in the face  
of death.