

morning dove

By Rowan Waller

we trudged down the quiet hall at the back of the sanctuary
leaving behind the warm weekend day full of possibilities our
heads bowed in an attempt at reverence but instead
counting the dark granite blocks below us as
mom led us deeper into the holy space
Sunday meant another hour of reserved energy spent
glaring at the priests and choking on the scent of
old women and candle wax we learned
to pretend we had to go to the bathroom to escape
the lengthy sermon and instead spent it eating snacks
next to the room brides donned their dresses in
we reached an age when mom didn't find our church
bulletin coloring acceptable and the other options were
to pay attention or poke the sleeping parishioners so I
started tearing off little corners of the hymnal book to fold
paper doves and by the time communion came around
I'd stand up to file towards the altar and release a
pile of tiny, white birds onto the consecrated floor