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Her Red Coat

PATRICIA CLARK

I remember none of my mother's clothes
except, from years ago, a red coat.
Is that all that's left of those
we love — a memory, a lump in the throat

when we see a certain color, or a smell
wafts to us on the random air?
I stood in a closet, unable to tell
time or say my own name, my hair

brushed by the folds of her clothes.
Some object will separate itself
from last year's losses, I suppose,
and ten years in the future engulf

an ordinary day with ancient pain.
The birdfeeder we gathered around
at dusk, perhaps, when the nearly tame
gray squirrels scabbled to the ground

down a tree-trunk. Or, more likely,
it will be some object long forgotten,
its dumb, accusing presence near me
when I'm almost healed, or have been

happy during a winter afternoon.
Sometimes I long, terribly, to have no
memory. I'd wake in the soon-
to-be-day gray-blue light like so

many other days and not be pierced
by these fragments from the past.
No more of this — sitting immersed
in sorrow, and tasting dust.