After this last death,

by Nonnie Augustine

After this last death,

I lose at musical chairs.
Rough strangers shove me toward the carved door.
Feeling fierce, I yell, "Don't push me!"
House racked with noise, smells, rushing,
I turn the doorknob. Cool, quiet, a darkening path.
Arms folded under the hot weight of my breasts,
I lean against the trunk of a tulip magnolia.
The nubs and edges of the massive tree scratch chilled skin.
I step away, drop my arms, open my palms.
Breezes tease the insides of my elbows.
Dead family murmur, pull until I float
toward them, surprised by ease.