

Shira Hoffman – Two Poems

From the Platform

Riding the f train home
we emerge from the tunnel
to harsh light. Below us
cargo containers and a dirty bay.
The Q and D are down
so now, I'm in Redhook
wondering at the red-faced man
across from me who
has clearly been crying.
These are not my usual commuters.

The first outdoor station,
the train let's out a collective sigh
as half the passengers disembark
heading home. Three more stops
of dirty brown sky roll by
when the conductor announces
last stop. Those of us who are left
step off, dazed, stumbling
in the daylight.

The man who was crying is still here,
he looks as lost as I feel. We sit,
on the raised platform
wondering why and how we got here.
Will we ever get home?
As we wait we stare

into the empty sky.
A slow blaze of color blooms
surrounding us
and for a moment
we are illuminated
and we stop wondering.

Last Call

we meet at a wine bar in Chelsea
so I can tell you I'm done

it is the night before
my grandmother dies

two days before we carry her
pausing three times

on the gravel road
with grass sinking underfoot

beside the mound of wet dirt
to show we do not hurry

trees all around us
you always pick places we can hide

you play with stray leaves
I wait for the waitress to go

I know about her
I expect a blink of shock

of course you do
I'm not even talking about your wife

I feel your phone buzzing in your shirt
you pretend not to notice

how many have your number?
don't you have anything to say?

the air is so thick I can taste the leaves
I watch my father lift the shovel

the first dirt rains black
on the pine white box

I lift the wrong side of the shovel
and can't help thinking

I am burying myself
in the scent of your shirt

for the last time.

Shira Hoffman (she/her) is a poet living with multiple invisible disabilities. Five of her poems were recently featured in *A Thin Slice of Anxiety*, her work also appears in a *Writer's Lair Books* anthology. She received her MFA in poetry from the New School before working in traditional publishing. Eventually, she relocated to Sommerville, MA where the people are still weird, but the air is cleaner. Follow her at @ShiraSHoffman on Twitter.