

Children's Sabbath **Samantha Kodikara**

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Wherever I go, there I am

With my uncertain curiosity, my tardiness, my unsteady hands,
my awkward declarations, my ache for approval, my hidden hallway tears at inopportune moments.

Sometimes I would like to take a vacation from her;
go somewhere far away, someplace alien
with biting winds and austere mountain ranges
and be a stranger.

Maybe I would come back new,
without any memories of a graceless woman cobbled together over three decades.

When the stranger strides about the hospital,
she does not drag her feet on the floor, or mumble, or drop her clipboard.

When she gives the Bad News,
she does not hedge.

She is unafraid to hold hands, to be challenged, to say she doesn't know.

But wherever I go, she is nowhere to be found;
there is only the old familiar specter
dragging herself along,
day by wretched day.

Sometimes, in the midst of my searching,
my futile wandering through the unforgiving moors and the coarse heath,
I can recall someone else-
someone smaller, hardier.

She is myself, from a time almost forgotten,
with my loud laugh, my love of rainstorms, my sheaves of copy paper covered in crayon portraits,
my families of acorns, my fear of the all-seeing eyes of the *Rudbeckia* thicket, my hidden candy corn in the closet,
my need to know more and more and more,
my courage to jump off the top diving board,
my belief that goodness is within us all.

Wherever I go, there I am.

I wonder, can I bring her, too?

about | poet

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