

## **Rites Without Water**

We will go there after we  
are done spreading her ashes.

It will be as it is and as it  
was every night that she taught  
us James Baldwin and Eve Ensler  
from the half-shell on her mind.

We will let the chill melt out of our cheeks,  
and we will drink coffee like Americans –  
too much and too hot in cups  
so large that they defy the circles of our hands.

We will chalk up hours in this place  
waiting for the two communist pensioners  
that come to play live bluegrass every Tuesday.

You will recall the chaos of her hair  
and the view of the town  
that her room's window afforded you.

I will ask you, again, to tell me the stories of where  
we have gone on our pilgrimage that day –  
the lake,

the library stairs,  
the broken and forlorn gazebo  
that beckons from the edge of the woods.

We will drink our coffee in the banjo steam  
of this place,  
and a grey-bearded Tom Joad will sing defiance  
of the wind that is coming down from the mountain,  
whipping up the dust outside,  
churning itself in circles around this town of ours.

