

Channelling With Grandma

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I did something different this morning—
Birdie, the psychic
told me to talk with Grandma
dead already more than four decades,
just make an appointment she said,
talk to her ask her what you like.

When everyone was sound asleep,
I plopped on your brown velour love seat,
wrapped myself in a warm robe
sat Indian style and called your name.
We have an appointment; let's talk, I whispered
as your skeleton stood before me
on the puffiest of white clouds
your arms stretched in my direction
wanting to hold but no longer knowing how.

I cried and told you
I missed you ever since
that day the ambulance drivers took you away
down those creaky wooden stairs
up my quiet childhood street
wet tears followed by dry ones
not wanting my own mother
to be nurtured by my grief, your substance.

You apologized
how I found you lying there
on Labor Day weekend,
sleeping pills spilled upon the bedside
sheer curtains swaying as birds chirp outside.

You told me you had no choice
your childhood misery strangled you.

You asked if I remembered
the long walk the night before
in our shared neighborhood
which I used to call home
where houses lined up
engulfed by well-watered gardens

When we got home
you told me you left me a gift
hidden in your walk-in closet
because I am the appointed family writer,
you knew from my very first push into the world
and my keen awareness
and hours spent seated
in my own closet
with my journal and pen
chronicling my lost world.

The gift—your very own journal
depicting our parallel lives
strongly convening
on the written page
intense and laden with emotion—
two survivors, rising after each fall
so many times
writing about what happened behind closed doors
like the one you killed yourself behind.