

COINS

I no longer save or collect them. As a child,
a penny held value—like bazooka bubble gum
wrapped in a comic.

My two-year old grandson asks *what's this?*
holding up a penny. When I say it's used
to buy things in stores, he stares at me with
a blank expression framed by stringy
blonde bangs. Has he ever been to a store?

Does your mommy use money like this?
His wide, hazel eyes are fixed on mine. I try
again. *Does your mommy buy things on her phone
or in a store?* That stare returns.

I tell him that when I was a child we had
no phones and had to walk or drive to stores.
That stare returns. (Am I that old?)
Look, that's Lincoln, he was our president, I tell him.
Back home I order the cutest little piggy bank,
exactly like the one my grandma bought me.

LIVING ALTARS

I give my grief to altars
Spread about different
parts of my life—
the magical forest
of meditative walks or beaches
where footprints last until next rainfall
or the altar in meditation rooms that hold
memorabilia of loves lost.

Then there's my office altar
of my beloved canine Spunky,
his brown wooden box beneath
blue collar. He was taken from me
last December 1st,
in my arms, on my bed,
gone naturally.

His last breath as vivid as
this computer screen. His altar
bears white flowers sent
by my daughter Regine, beside a photo
of us both. Energetically
one can see how we needed
and loved one another.

Altars help to keep our beloveds alive—
tidbits of memories like fuel for our hearts,
oh how they can all live forever if we let them!

MEMORIES

You saunter down your street
as if for the last time,
pass a store you'd
seen for seventy years—
a deli whose name
you've forgotten,
but you can still taste
their tuna sandwiches
with crunchy celery
and vinegar chips on the side.

The owner, also
there, for decades,
shoulders caved
with unsteady gait.
What's his name?

Oh and his wife,
with that floral kerchief
on her head
and unmatching apron
standing cross-armed behind
her husband who chats
with all the customers.

Why are feelings
easier to name
and smells only elicit
snapshots of vivid memories?

You wonder such things
as you age, although
you've been caring much less
about these wonderings.

Those moments—how they matter.