

Liturgy of the Hours

by Gary Percesepe

Sometimes late at night my dead sister visits and it is always the same, where the forest runs down to the sea I lie in bed and listen for the murmur of the ocean, the great soft sound of it, until it seems my mother sings a low soft lullaby; though I live alone we are all present, my father sitting by the fireplace mending his torn sweater, the four of us safely gathered, my brother still nine, the year of his departure, my sister six, while my four year old self drifts to sleep dreaming of the meadow that runs to the foaming sea, blue with flowers. When I wake there is no one to tell the dream until moonlight lies again on the floor like the white skin of my sister and I begin again to speak of the seal rocks on the coast hidden in shadow, and the mermaid whose song is heard just beyond the last white line of the waves, appears--her showery head bobbing in the silvery night, her voice like running water, and I forget that I had ever lived alone.

