

Waiting for Hurricane Dennis, Florida 2005

by Nonnie Augustine

WAITING FOR HURRICANE DENNIS, FLORIDA 2005

With soft eyes,
she quizzed,
shivered, said:

“Where's Dad?
Where's Ric?
Will you leave me here alone?
Are you all going to leave?
Where's Peter?
Do you feel all right?
We're the only ones here.
We need to leave.

Who's in the attic?
I hear them
Why are they there?
They are there. Why?
The storm's too big,
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.
We'll all be hurt.
Where's the cat?
Where's the dog?

Is Peter outside?
Are you going to leave me?
I can't see well.
No! I don't want to eat.

No! I won't take a pill.
It's here, isn't it?
No! Don't change the channel.
Where's Dad?
Is Ric here?

I can't lie down.
Will you stay here?
There's no air
They put those boards
on the windows.
We have no air.
There's no air in this house."
Finally she took a pill.
I tucked her in,
and kissed her forehead.

Safe in bed at last,
her face relaxed.
I said, "I love you.
We'll be fine."
I rubbed her leg,
shoulder, felt bones.
Tired eyes closing
she whispered to me.
"What did you say, Mom?"
"Thank you. I said thank you."
And I left the room
lest she see my tears.
Mom was asleep
before the wind
picked up.

