Sidewalk Chalk

Delaney Novak
Western Michigan University, delaneyanovak@gmail.com

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Sidewalk Chalk

DELANEY NOVAK

If I go anywhere after I die
I imagine it will be a moment—
back in my fresh childhood,
on a budding summer day

when I couldn’t tell whether
it was ten or four in the afternoon,
and time stretched boundlessly—
like water on a deceitful horizon.

I’ll die and wake up
underneath purple fairy netting—
Mourning Doves at my window,
coo-00-00-00’s filling blue air

while shafts of yellow sunlight
stretch to stroke my velvet skin,
making rainbows through the glass—
colors fluttering on butterfly sheets.

Or I’ll emerge outdoors
barefoot on warm, black concrete—
breathing in the familiar cut grass,
pastel chalk in my plump, peach hand
while inspecting green vines
of pink and red Morning Glories,
trumpet-like blooms still open—
not yet their closed-umbrella shape.

If I go anywhere after I die
I imagine it will be a moment—
back in my fresh childhood,
on a fleeting summer day

when I didn’t know that
gray rains would soon come,
and churn my artwork into dust—
melting the white clouds away.