

# Cloud Shadow

Brandon Krieg

I've gone out to watch  
the prairie's minute-by-minute character under tall cumulus.  
It's too subtle; I have to look away.  
I peel a stiff grass.

I see you and  
I have to look away.

Cloud shadow crosses your face,  
you are remembering  
your mother arriving late to yell at you  
for not lining up your younger siblings' shoes,  
your father taking the side of his new wife who  
tore your drawings down your bedroom wall,  
threw away the clothes you bought yourself,

or that, long divorced, your parents sat together  
terrified on either side your bed  
as the intern penned an X  
above the tumor on your naked thigh  
then wheeled you away, or that you  
admire a particular writer for never once  
indulging what isn't true.

Yesterday I was winning  
some argument with you in my head  
when from a high window I saw our son spin  
on the orange and blue and yellow spiral snail  
you had drawn in chalk on the slab of a gone garage,  
and I saw you smiling up at him  
so particularly I was ashamed  
I had not always looked at you this closely.

This morning, after a night of rain,  
the snail is gone.