

A Safe Place

Sarah Fowler

I once purchased my own urn.
It was the color of the earth.
It was made of clay
fired, set,
and polished to a shine.
It was simple and elegant.
I believed it would be a good fit.
It comforted me
to choose the place where I would reside
when I was finished
and to familiarize myself
with its weight,
its contours,
its body.
Because soon
it would be familiar
with mine.

I liked that its color reminded me
of the ground:
a memory
of something solid
to keep me company
and to keep me safe.
I breathed into it
whispered my name into it,
filling it with my life
to prepare it
to be filled in my death;
I knew that the memory of my life
held in its core
would comfort the memory of my body
when my ashes had settled there,
perhaps stimulated
in some small way
by the condensation left over,
like an imprint of my living lungs.

I wanted everything to be in order,
everything to be ready:
a streamlined process
for whomever dealt with the details
I was unable to take care of
beforehand.
Because I could do a lot,
but I couldn't put my own ashes
into the urn.
I was calm
in the simplicity of it all--
the exactness
and the preparation
and the certainty.
Most of all,
I was happy that my ashes
had a familiar place
to call home.
I was ready.
And that,
it turned out,
was enough.

(I got rid of the urn.)