

## *Two Poems*

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### *Hourglass, Event Horizon*

Grain by grain, the hourglass ticks:  
Before. After. Now.  
Now, although one tiny grain of sand  
overwhelms the after and before,  
especially the before.

Remember parties?  
I don't.  
I do.  
I sort of do.  
Crowded streets, parks, classrooms swept away

(suddenly, gradually—it's hard to say)  
and relegated to another time,  
an easy era we won't see again  
any time soon,  
not for months or years, or maybe never.

The event horizon  
on which the hourglass  
is perched precariously  
has dwindled to a narrow shelf  
crammed with family photos.

Those crinkly eyes, that beard;  
those two small sisters, one brunette, one blond;  
the laughter on that face—  
memories for which there's barely room,  
fear takes up so much space.

## *Truer Than History*

I and a friend who lost our fathers early  
 both grew up to be poets.  
 And both of us used poems to record  
 a phrase each father said.

*This is the life*

My friend remembers her father saying.  
 He was carrying her on his shoulders  
 as they bobbed on a raft in the Florida surf.

My father in a playground in Riverside Park,  
 watching me climb, swing, slide,  
 said *Be careful*.  
 Four words; two words.

Not that our fathers had no more to say.  
 But these two lapidary phrases  
 inscribed themselves on our blank young slates  
 with proleptic force.

Resonating now after more than half a century,  
 our fathers' words sound histrionic,  
 their very boom of authenticity  
 making them somehow suspect.

Poetry is truer than history, said Aristotle.  
 History is only everything that happened;  
 poetry everything that might have happened  
 or that might still happen.

I think that's what he said.  
 We were in the playground, he and I,  
 I in my snowsuit, he in his fedora,  
 or splashing on a raft in an azure sea.