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ILONA MARTONFI

My blind sister's mortuary dress

Mártonfi Éva, April 28, 1944-April 16, 2014

Lacemaker with bone bobbins
braided mesh with slim, oval leaves.
Plum on black silk.

As the bobbins twist together
plait the threads.

Middlesex Terrace Long Term Care
by the Thames River, Rural Route 1, Delaware
fruit belt of southern Ontario

late into the night
I sew sister's mortuary dress:
tiny silver buttons.
Buttonholes,
lace ruffles as for a child.
Budapest, Liszt Ferenc utca 14

Mártonfi Magda
bears a daughter, Éva Ibolya,

two years of high school.
Cashier at Warshaw's at seventeen
on the Main in Montréal
met and married Alfonso.

Late into the night
I sew sister's burial gown:
tiny silver buttons.
Bobbin lace.
Died of complications of diabetes,
congestive heart disease.

One daughter, two sons,
two grandsons,
husband, attend the urn funeral.

Late into the night.
Tiny silver buttons.
Peasant lace.

Ilona Martonfi published four poetry books: Blue Poppy (2009); Black Grass (2012); The Snow Kimono (2015) and Salt Bride (2019). Forthcoming, The Tempest (2021).