

Disappearing Is No Act

For the life of me, I can't remember ...
My mother disrupts another of her own stories
to search for the lost detail—
whether the border on the curtains
above the kitchen sink three houses ago
was violet or pink, which day
of the week my father was laid off in July of 1958,
whether the family from my mother's childhood
one farm over (*You know their six-year-old boy*
drowned in the irrigation ditch) eventually had eight
children or nine and all their names and ages
when she last saw them.
She looks over my head where she has left
the room and entered her misty memory
in search of the answer. *Which ear*
of your brother's fifth grade teacher
stuck out funny? Was it the right or the left?
You remember he was murdered two years later
by a hitchhiker he picked up. Stabbed him to death
for a dollar fifty, or maybe only seventy-five cents.
Or was it sixty-seven cents? I know
there was a quarter in the ashtray ...

Corri Elizabeth