



THE SUDDEN HOLY¹

—LYNNE KNIGHT

The tedium of personal history, the stories
and their repetitions. And then
a body stripped of all sense of itself
beyond the fundamentals: pain, hunger,
whatever primitive needs keep it twisting
in the night. Some days you believe
you can will her back. Call her name,
say key words—huckleberry, plate
glass, maple—and she'll come running

like a child from the dark. Even now,
ten years after her death, you believe it,
fool that you choose to be over the cynic
scoffing in ridicule. After all, miracles
have been recorded, sworn to, whole
industries have arisen around them—
crucifixes, rosaries, statues and plaques—
and those just for one of many religions
your father claimed were all alike

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in being opiates designed to keep
the flock moving in the desired
direction, believing death was nothing
more than a bridge they would cross
into another world because this one, this one—
and here your father would pause, strike
another match, wave the flame extinct—
this one was, let's face it, botched.
Not that you believed him any more

than religion once you were old enough
to see the sorrow at the core of him.
Of most of us, but let's not shift the focus.
Why you as daughter, why those two
as mother and father—those questions
that keep taking you as close as you're apt
to come to nothingness. To no answer.
To down-on-your-knees anyway for every
breath you'll get, for every blessed repetition.

Lynne Knight is the author of six full-length poetry collections, and of six chapbooks. Her work has appeared in many journals, including *Poetry* and *Southern Review*. Her awards and honors include publication in *Best American Poetry*, a *Prix de l'Alliance Française*, a PSA Lucille Medwick Memorial Award, a *RATTLE* Poetry Prize, and an NEA grant. *I Know (Je sais)*, her translation with the author Ito Naga of his *Je sais*, appeared in 2013. She lives on Vancouver Island.