

Not So Bereft

ADAM SWINFORD-WASEM

In my twenties, those intense raw days,
I felt an anxious need to praise
whatever I could memorialize—
furiously scribbling hagiographies
whenever someone dear had died
for fear insufficient gratitude
would cause even memory to slip away.

But I've found my fears were all absurd:
For though they've dwindled anyway,
Leaving, it's true, ever less and less;
Yet what remained was the purest of love—
Nuggets of light panned from the dross of death,
myself, in their leaving, left not so bereft
as to fail to see death's necessity—
That final, total test of faith.
After all, if God exists, they're still here, just unseen;
if not, my self-delusion that they are will comfort me:
So I've eased off on the epitaphs;
I figure, if one's needed, I'll get word.

[Adam Swinford-Wasem, a native Chicagoan, was educated at Pomona College (Claremont, CA) and Northwestern University (Chicago, IL). His poem "Holy War" can be found at www.ginkworld.net.]