

For a Father · *Maria Flook*

Secretly, inside his serious desk,
the black cardboard silhouette
of a fourth grader maintains
its crisp profile.
One blue valentine
from a teenager on probation
is turning violet.

If we take a colored slide
and hold it up,
the little girls inside
show us how far we have gone.
The lamp behind, cool white—
some call this cruelty.

Remember the grassy hill
where a father
made the movies.
Two daughters
somersaulted single file
until they rolled out of view.

And if he called them back
they did not listen,
it was better to keep tumbling.
Pink seersucker deepened
a blood-like green.
Into the dark
they fell.