still
Sarah Elizabeth Wakeman

on a shelf it sits
wrapped there in grays and blues
with edges taped tight
i turn my back, avert my eyes
i laugh and move and live
and stretch my mouth with smiles

but still it sits.

like a shadow it lingers, attached
but separate, a dark silhouette affixed to my seams
its presence hovers, magnetic
from afar it pulls, up close repels
an irreconcilable force
now and then i think i almost forget

but still it sits.

last week i took it down
and held it between two cold hands
careful and deliberate i began to examine
turning it over, touching its contours
the weight of sorrow heavy in my palms
seal unbroken, i reached high and shoved it back

and still it sits.

This poem was written about the author’s struggle to deal with grief after her father’s death.

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