Her First Experience of Loss

Deep snow cover, white for weeks,
too cold to melt into depressing dirt banks
and islands of ice until one day of warm
and it raced straight to grass, water flowing
over detritus suspended like flies in amber
suddenly flattened on a soggy bog.

One pink mitten and a plastic barrette,
clap-clap dangling, a spray of flowers
foreshadowing, the child months older,
a lifetime, touching her hair, remembering.

What happened to the the Gold Bracelet My Parents Gave Me on My Sixteenth Birthday

A piano-shaped jewelry box. Gold,
with a filigree pattern, red velvet lining,
a gift from my ex-husband
that I hated, the shape so kitschy
and childish. So like him to see me as a doll.
I left the earrings in it when my friends
had a sale. Not bothering to price anything,
I took offers and gave an okay to a man
who looked inside and, gleeful,
offered me five dollars.

The Missing Medal

I have it, my dad’s Bronze Star. It sits
in a porcelain box with blue flowers
on its lid. I sent my brother the gold
pocket watch but did not disclose
I had sold the coin collection,
my resentment at his escape
from the terrible decline of our
parents so strong I was willing
to lie, let him think that Duane,
a guy mother hired to help her,
had stolen it all.