2017

Fire

Emily Matthews
When my grandfather was a young boy, his mother’s dress caught fire while she, bent over, tied his shoes for church.

She, afraid of catching the house on fire, ran outside and tried to roll the flames out.

She, afraid of what her son might see, begged, *stay inside.*

My great-grandmother burned to death on that Sunday morning, her son still by the fireplace, his eyes tightly shut.

When my grandfather was a young man, he volunteered at the local fire station and fought flames for many years.

I wonder if he ever closed his eyes when smoke hit the back of his throat just right.