

Would You like to Have it?

poetry

Margaret Shelton

When I walk, I sway my nana's hips.

The last time I saw you, you were in your momma's arms.

We sit at the kitchen table and push coins into cardboard cylinders.

Two smiles,

Five dollars,

Twenty Washingtons destined for the bank
that she puts into my hands instead.

Nobody fries okra like Ruby.

We wake up too early to make biscuits.

Strong and beautiful crooked hands knead years of deep love into dough.

I sprinkle flour, roll dough, cut circles.

"How much longer?"

"Oh," she smiles and squints at me, "Just until they look ready."

If you're not your grandma all over again!

I am five years old, and

I am twelve years old, and

I am nineteen years old, and we're under the fan on the screen porch
in the wet heat, and she's

sitting on the rocking chair in her pajamas and her rings.

I am nineteen years old, and

She asks me to sit on her lap.

"I'll squish you, Nana."

"That's alright."

God shined right through that woman.

I stand in the kitchen,

and I smile.

I hug my mom and I hug my dad and I shake hands with family I don't know,
and I am smiling,

and I hug my cousin with his red halo of hair.

As he locks me in his arms, I notice there's broken glass on the floor

because something has fallen off one of the shelves that line the walls of my body,
and I am crying

because

She was so proud of you.