

My Sister

Poetry — Caroline Prewitt

During the brief two years we went to elementary school together,
my older sister would meet me in the green tube
connecting two platforms on the playground,
a sprawling microcosm of rungs and platforms.

There, in the convection oven of spit and dirt and spring pollen,
slumped against the curve of the tube, our tennis shoes resting
above our knees,
she would lean over to whisper about her day, or
ask me to point out my first grade boyfriend,
one of the kids roaming outside the small square of
thick glass, all blurry and shaded green.

Once, as she was crawling out of the tube,
her shoe slipped on the smooth paint of the ladder,
and she fell back-first into the mulch.

I tried to get help, to yell for the teachers
because she's crying, but the words couldn't
make their way to my mouth and all
I could say was
my sister, my sister, my sister.

I can still picture her lying there,
hair gathered around her head like a halo, wind
knocked out of her body, gasping in the dirt.

I remember, even then,
hoping I looked just like her when I grew up.