**Uncle Rick**

Adina Edelman

“How was your day?”

he asks, voice crackly

over the phone.

I stare out the stained window

and tell him about Miss Martin

who ran out screaming

even though we hadn’t

set her desk on fire

only threatened to,

and we laugh about

Jerry who fell on the rain-slicked

court and skinned both knees

so hard it looked like he’d

painted them red.

I wouldn’t normally laugh,

but Jerry called me fat

and poor and stupid;

so he deserved it.

I told Uncle Rick about

forgetting my sandwich,

how Dad couldn’t bring it

so the nurse gave me yogurt

the special M&M kind

“Just for emergencies,” she said,

and I liked it but wondered

why Dad couldn’t come since

he didn’t have a job anyway.

“So when are you gonna visit?”

I ask, watching as Mom’s car hiccups

into the cracked driveway.

I hear his silence, then,

“Love you, kiddo.”

Phone clicks off. Mom walks in

eyes weepy, voice cracking,

“Honey, Uncle Rick

died this morning.”