**For Whatever it was Not Worth**

Anima Pookkunniyil

The absence

doesn’t render me breathless

but is a pang that lingers

hanging on like an irksome guest

rolling into a lump in the throat

coming unbidden

descending to be a flutter in the belly

dissipating as quickly as it is born.

did the moment hold promise?

not that I remember

a chance meeting

a second glance

an uneasy acknowledgement

snarky curl of the lips from you

reluctant nod from me

and we were done.

not a syllable to warm the years

of proximity.

yet it comes back now

to haunt and tear asunder

the chilling silence

the move not made

the debris of

conversations never had

walks not taken

jokes unshared.

the stockpile of stolen glances

the delicately crafted nonchalance

were of no use in the end.

but it embers the caverns of the heart

and turns it into fistful of ash

to grime the skin.

the loss, mine and yours,

for whatever it was not worth

refuses to leave.