**One Pixel is Worth a Thousand Woes**

Julie Weiss

Some kids collect coins or rocks.

Mine, pixels. Their pockets bulge

with them, split at the seams, pixels

tumbling out, clattering onto pavement

as they run toward the park, shrieks

not quite strong enough to cross oceans

on the back of a spring breeze.

They stop to sweet-talk a purr of kittens

curled behind a fence, and for the umpteenth

time today, I edit my parents into the frame,

twine their fingers around my children´s,

my mind a meadow, overgrown with

illusions. Too late, I realize they aren´t

being hoisted to the top but are climbing.

The hands I conjure out of wind—aged, eager

for touch—disintegrate too quickly to break

a fall. My phone is filled with videos

like this one, a swirl of pollen, a skinned knee,

spaces in the shape of absence their grannies

ought to inhabit. At the playground, other children´s

grandparents push them high on swings,

guide them down slides. Attractions

teeter and whirl, in danger of gliding down

the hill, or maybe I´m watching this scene

through a tremble of vapor, like a child

pressed up against her bedroom window,

grounded. How the street quakes, her friends´

ball deflected into traffic. How later we´ll call

my parents on Skype, collect kisses

that crash against precipices of distance,

that break into thousands of pixels, that freeze

before reaching my children´s cheeks.