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Closet

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Closet

by Laurie Patton

The upper closet
had a tiny window—
latticed and round.
Its patch of light
(sometimes gray,
sometimes yellow)
lifted us skyward.

We went there often
to be wrapped
by the hemlines
of winter coats
still smelling of pine
and to be held
by the rows of shoes,
their leathery colors
barely visible
in the light.

Once we were cradled
in fleece and wool,
we craned our necks
to see the moon.

One evening,
as we were whispering
among the coats,
our father, the surgeon,
came in
and put a candle
on the windowsill.

When we asked him
what it was for,
he said
it was there
to call our dog home.

He said
that the flame
in the closet window
could bring the dog
(now dead
for seven months)
back to his bed
near the door.

