

Grief Haibun

when my sister's father starts dying we are in georgia and he is in detroit
and there are many miles to drive we take turns behind the wheel
of my sister's blue toyota corolla the one she let me borrow when i was in high school
while she took the marta train to and from work we get the call
in a state i can't remember a state that was close but not close enough
we keep driving anyway arrive as they are wheeling him out
of the door she gets to hold his hand when my mother starts dying
we are in georgia and so is she convinced just months earlier to move
in with me and my sister splitting our two bedroom apartment three ways
we spend 11 days in hospice on that last one i decide to go back work rent
doesn't care about death but first a sign that i shouldn't leave — my old beat up honda
civic parked on an incline with enough gas to drive but not enough
to start at that angle my sister uses her triple a they fill the tank enough
i am clocked in for 30 minutes when i get the call.

don't grief always come
at the end of the ringing
as if that's its voice?

Talicha J. is a Black queer poet, teaching artist, and Pushcart Prize nominee. She curates workshops and virtual writing retreats that foster growth and connection. Her work appears in several literary journals, and her chapbook, **Taking Back the Body**, was released in 2024.

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