Hot Still Sunday

Betty Lartius*
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Abstract

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by

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— especially Miss Fryback
who no one loved
who yelled “Amen and Hallelujah”
all in one breath.

Hot still Sundays
my shoes smelled white polish and pulled my socks inside
my pinafore itched and Mom poked me for scratching in public
which she said wasn’t polite
— especially in church
and I thought about my pet rooster
while everybody had their eyes shut praying.

Hot still Sundays
Esther Shadday made us remember Bible verses
in front of the whole Sunday School
and I was afraid I’d forget
— but then she got TB and went away
and we didn’t have to memorize Bible verses or anything else anymore.

Hot still Sundays
the limpy man they called Brother Charlie
poked farmer hands down in a brown bag
and put peppermints in my hands
— they melted sweet in my mouth
and my tongue turned pink
and it was the nicest part of hot still Sundays.
Hot still Sundays
Preacher Green told how the world would end in fire
and the dead would come up out of their graves
and the Lord would come
and everybody'd say "Amen and Hallelujah"
— except me
because I wanted things just like they were
with my pet rooster
and Mom and Dad
and the huckster man bringing chocolate bars
every Thursday.