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Private Origami

Trey Dunham
Denison University

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Private Origami

for Jim

Somehow the bells knew
before we did,
ringing softly between class;

They would not sound for him anymore,
they knew, so whispered solemnly
their benediction.

Speed had caught him I heard;
Tiny bits, squares of paper,
a lonely crease in solitary origami,

folded, twisted, contorted
into double barrels pressed
against his chest.

His mother found him dead,
blood spilling like old newspapers
out of a dumpster on 52nd street.

How she must have cried,
tearing herself,
ripping, shredding,

picking up those spilt pages
reading them, trying to understand
the fine print.

I wish he could have heard
those bells softly toll and seen the halls
filled with reams and reams of twisted, folding lives.

—Trey Dunham '94