

The Day We Played Chess  
By Sarah Parijs

We played a game once, do you remember?  
The way that I aligned each piece  
with anxious, shaky fingers  
while you waited to collapse  
all my plans with callous ease.  
I shook so bad that the pieces rattled,  
The pieces rattled so bad they shook me.

What were the colors? I can't remember...  
Your pieces were white,  
my pieces were black.  
While I watched the color leeches out  
of my pieces and into yours.  
Yours were black and mine were white,  
yours were white and mine were black...  
the pieces were colorful, the pieces were colorless.

Do you remember the rules we played by?  
In an infinity of geometry you taught me the rules:  
pawns leave first and move one space  
killing diagonal, rooks move straight kill straight...  
you went on forever and I understood one thing:  
I moved one space diagonally to end up in a corner  
and you encompassed the geometry of murder.

We played a game once, do you remember?  
Because I can't,  
in playing the game, we became the game.  
I still don't understand, my only clue  
is the perfect stillness in your calculation,  
the implosion of colorless color that splattered.  
The millions of strategies, of murders,  
of cold careless ways  
that you slaughtered across the board.