

## The Things We Cling To

*Kathleen Cerveny*

Concert programs, ticket stubs.  
A chipped blue coffee cup  
bristling with the paint-caked  
brushes from your art school days.

Orphaned socks that somehow seem  
to still retain potential. Beads  
and buttons rattling in the corners  
of the kitchen's crowded junk drawer.

This one from the leather jacket  
back in high school; how its skin  
felt next to yours, stirring thoughts  
you could not then put into words.

Two beads from the bracelet with the faulty  
catch, pale jade buckshot waterfaling down  
the staircase of the Union Club's grand hall  
when life seemed on the rim of a beginning.

An apothecary jar of satin beach glass  
that's sat on every windowsill of every  
kitchen you have occupied since that summer  
up in Maine—the first touch and taste of ocean.

And this small stone—  
    its metamorphic whorls  
a foliated record of abandonment  
    to heat, persuasive press  
        of elements,  
    of time;  
an unlocked diary  
        of transformation.  
    This talisman of change  
        plucked  
from the bottom of the icy pond,  
    breath held,  
        naked  
in the rhododendron forest,  
    air, the future, wild  
with scarlet trumpets.

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