

## Pearls

The odd thing is, my brother is missing.  
We lock arms in a semi-circle: cousins  
and friends, girls in their padded bras.  
*Where am I?* he asks.

December, six months since our father  
became our sole parent. My father  
is going steady—he doesn't tell us  
he is already married. He and his date

light a candle for the bar mitzvah boy.  
Rhinestones around her wrist,  
she twists with cousin Dick.

But outside, the boy catches snowflakes  
on his eyelids, someone bends to kiss his face,  
her pearl earrings against his cheek.