

“(Un)Familiar”
by Allison Budaj

What is this place I cannot seem to leave?
Exit near, the flight I cannot achieve.
When did I get here? From where did I come?
Hard to recall in this ceaseless doldrums.
Who are these confined people all around?
Their fate like mine to this place ever bound.
Who is this girl by me in this bleak place?
A very calming, familiar sweet face.
Who is this child holding my hand in hers?
Seems so kind but her name I am unsure.
I do not know this girl they call my kin.
Her gaze fixed as tears glide around her chin.
Why do I not have a thought of her name?
May never know but love her all the same.

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Not my Nina, the woman before me,
Head hanging low without much joy or glee.
Not my Nina, laughing in days gone by,
Body broke from memory gone awry.
A hollow shell of the person I knew,
Her gaunt eyes still a radiating hue.
She looks up at me with a puzzled stare,
Her mind trying to guess me standing there.
As if she knows, her scowl curls to a smile,
Eyes burst into tears, been such a long while.
With this beaming grin years melt from her face,
How could we leave you in such a bleak place?
Mom says it's best, she is beyond our care,
Turning to leave with heartbreak, I can't bear.