

Ariel Martinez Brumbaugh

The Death and Afterlife of Stories

I can see it coming, from thirty pages away;
your death. But there is no telling, from here,
even though the pages between my right thumb
and forefinger trace the dwindling words,
as leaves of paper fall away,
how your death will treat me.
I will remember all that has transpired,
all surprises, all heartaches, all fears and twists,
stepping stones across this paper river,
and I will catalogue them somewhere in my brain.
I will write a eulogy, in an attempt to make the physical
closing of your cover a metaphor for life and death.
And on your last page, while I savor words, and your last
breath is exhaled; when I am no longer living side by side
with you, I ask myself if the journey, and your finest
moments of life, are worth the pain of your death.
Once shelved you exist infrequently,
in memories and casual conversations.

Ariel Martinez Brumbaugh is a self proclaimed naturalist poet. Her work seeks to understand the mentality of human kind by exploring the world around her. Her poetry has been published in *The Bay Weekly*, *Seltzer* and *PennUnion*. She is a high school writing teacher at School for Tomorrow in Rockville, MD.