

On the Miniature Pumpkins You Hid Through the House

I found the last pumpkin
a month after you were gone.
It was like a joke told backwards,
the punchline was in the past —
I barely had time to smile,
I was so busy getting the camera
I keep in my underwear drawer
which is in the hallway chest where the front door is,
so I can quick take pictures of people in the present
just before they go someplace else.

It was a game between us,
you hiding something I gave you,
constantly and unremittingly
giving it back — first it, and then
duplicates, triplicates,
twins, triplets,
innumerable doppelgangers
of it back,
until the joke no longer lay in the finding,
but in the hiding,
and the hiding took place so long ago,
its mirror in being found
took me too far back.

Because wasn't that me, the one
I originally gave you,
and wasn't it you
I was supposed to find
in these miniature pumpkins
so full of seeds,
enough seeds to sink a love boat
in these orange jokes I kept finding
for a month
after you were gone.