

sleepwalking

3.am. pancakes
she trips on the spiral staircase
that used to hold their weight
in the gingerbread house
before the syrup lost its stick

a misplaced memo, a forgotten face, a tear-stained pillow, a garage cluttered with guilt
a 4x4 bullet in a wooden frame
the edges are blurry, but the faces sting like a papercut

seven half-smiling girls, holding their knees to their chest, wondering who *really* loves them
blonde, brown, and black shadows on the white, stained wall
promises of sisterhood freshly tattooed on their lips
jean jacket barricades, waterproof mascara, a knock off Juicy sweatsuit
no tylenol, no armor, no beaded bracelet strong enough for this kind of ambush

why didn't anyone tell them that sweet, sweet taste of the pink gumball doesn't last forever (it
was only 25 cents, remember?)
why didn't I grab them by their shoulders, their shoulders bearing only the burden of 32As
and remind them that the circles under their eyes are not a sign of permanent damage
but that eventually someone will throw a rock right out into the middle of the lake and the earth
will CRACK until none of the pieces fit back together

but their shoulders remain fixed, erect slabs of concrete inside a crumbling church,
two feet apart, on the spiral staircase, adorned with christmas garland
in the middle of january