
POETRY | FALL 2020

We Almost Lost You

By Varsha Kukafka

Before the lockdown—when we still pay a visit—
I ask my mom if she lived through an epidemic.

We almost lost you, so she says—
same words I've heard before, again, again.

She says this at the age of ninety-seven—
a skip, a hop—a pirouette—from heaven.

Warm waves weave in and out my belly
whenever she re-tells

My infant bout with whooping cough—
my little face turned blue, my tiny look of fear enough

for two—and she still gasps as she recounts that loop:
three violent hacks, one long-drawn high-pitched inspiration, ghastly *whoop*.

Oh, wild greedy me! At my age—stalled by this pandemic—enthralled to be
the child—child almost lost to *We*—

Varsha Kukafka is a writer whose work appeared in *AGNI Online*, *Salamander*, *The American Journal of Poetry*, *Philadelphia Stories*, *Painted Bride Quarterly*, *Ibbetson Street* and other journals and in limited edition letterpress broadsides with her visual art. She has read at the Boston Poetry Festival and other venues. She served as an assistant district attorney for twenty years and was a licensed practical nurse.

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