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Poem

Memory Ball

Willa Schneberg 

Used by Yakima Tribeswomen

I like small and simple –
 a shell, a bead, a knot.
 This moon snail is the first inch of peony
 stalk, pushing through the soil, this black bead
 is the father I wanted to love, who would become
 attached to a bed and a bedpan,
 this knot is for the one I tied with you.
 The string keeps winding,
 the hemp ball growing.
 It will be enormous, much bigger
 than the rubber band balls ever were.
 I haven't decided if I want you to know
 these bits of memory. The dog head triton is,
 'I will always love you,' from the man who's now
 a Facebook friend, the blue bead is the mural
 of the homeless teen who holds a tiny house
 in his palm, another knot is the little girl who walks
 looking down to read her 'bookie'. Should
 I tell you, or someone younger, to be alive longer,
 should I keep it as my secret pleasure –
 each shell, each bead, each knot?

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