

Short Sleeve February

by [Jeff Gundy](#) in the [February 2024](#) issue

Published on February 20, 2024

At the playground a girl managed to climb up
onto the high spinny thing, her brothers reaching,

reaching for the bars as she turned, watched.

She didn't help them, but she watched.

Nothing on Cob Lake but a green plastic bottle,
a few curled-up leaves, a little flurry of insects

hatched early. One finds my forearm, tickling,
slender and black, gone before I get a photo.

And then I see the intact wings, breast bone,
leg bone of a goose splayed on the limestone shelf,

still clinging together somehow, a sort of still life
or still death, hardly painterly but calm and precise,

about its business, tangled in thorny blackberry canes,
on the way to its next life, its next lives.

There is a song for this. I am not ready to sing it.