

# The Weight of Absence

*Judy Katz*

When you died our house sank deeper into the earth,  
 pressing on the roots of trees.  
 I could feel it sinking  
 as each visitor pushed open the front door,  
 laden with cakes and casseroles, the full weight  
 of their bodies—every muscle and tendon,  
 shinbone pelvis hips moving  
 down the hallway, moving past the closet  
 where your dresses hung, still with your smell,  
 moving into the living room where our father  
 sat low to the ground.

I had watched you grow smaller and smaller,  
 ice chips on your tongue.  
 And as the morphine took you  
 here and there, Paris and summer camp,  
 the lake at night—  
 I thought I understood:  
 lighter and lighter  
 you would become,  
 a lightness leading  
 to nothing.

But the house did not rise that day;  
 it sank.  
 No mass    no matter  
 no thing    in the bed  
 in the blankets  
 in your place.