Wall of Stone

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WALL OF STONE

Beth Turner Ayers

My brother called to say the words
She could not say herself – to me
Her sister, who shared her bed when small
The one who walked, side by side
Never breaking stride on dark mornings
In heat and cold we challenged the status quo
The two of us together, the “papergirls”
Later walking side by side at the edge of the sea
Gathering shells and dreams

The wall went up – but I did not build it
Did not place uneven wobbly stones
In a haphazard pile, between us
Did not spread concrete between each stone
But I did not try to scale the wall
To peek at the other side
Or reach out to dislodge a single stone
Did not search for a path around it
To get a glimpse of my little sister

Once in a while I would tap on the wall
Like the Morse code that passed between us
In the darkness of our shared room, long ago
Little response floated to my ear
So I waited with words unspoken
Allowing my baseless perception
To restrain my hammer and chisel
While she did the same – each of us assuming
And time passed around us...

So much time that wisdom came with age
And an email came with more than a brief reply
A phone call lasted with laughter and shared thought
The wall began to crumble - slowly but surely
Then suddenly, it was toppled by cancer
Another shared experience
That opened the line of communication
And I began to realize that wall of stone
Had always been unnecessary fabrication