

THE STARS WILL SHINE AGAIN

It's been so long since a friend
suggested I look up Walt's poem

about a man and his daughter at the beach,
and clouds start to cover Jupiter and the Pleiades

and she cries, and he tells her but dearest,
the stars will all shine again,

the great and the little,
and there is something even more immortal

than they, something that shall endure,
that I can't remember why

she told me about it.

But it shone today as I tried to find it,

as war made Rori cry,

her romantic dreams of suicide and Kurt

blown away by the thought of getting
blown to a place even Kurt never went

or gagged on the hostage water
we washed our hands in yesterday.

She said let's move to Catalina Island
tomorrow, where the terror can't go.

I don't know what would find us there
or how it found us here, but instead

I drove her home,
unloading water and supplies

at a house under the clouds
that was mine, too, for months at a time.

Part of the thing that'll endure
is a friend telling you about it

and another part is our survival
after what we know is taken away.

Although I can't protect even one girl
I can tell her what'll endure.

But in the night that absorbs hope
I drove away from a woman's home

and a child calling me home,
forever a cloud too mortal to lift

leaving my daughter where I hope
she doesn't cry now even if I do.

If she does, may her tears find me
becoming what endures.

P. Shneidre