

Sugar Cookies

—for Jean

Every time I bite into a sugar cookie,
the kind Jean used to make, my teeth
sinking into that soft frosting,

I remember the afternoon that we sat on
her front step, eating cookies and watching
as dare-devil roofers hammered

shingles onto the steeple of the Green Street
Methodist Church. The men hung suspended
from cranes that lifted

them ever higher as they rappelled around
the steeple, their voices carrying so well
in the autumn air

that we could hear their happy banter as
they joked about doing the Lord's work.
The frosting on the cookies

was so sweet that it made my teeth ache.
Still, we watched all afternoon like children
at the circus, heads tilted skyward,

never doubting that the ropes would hold.
We never talked about the hard decisions
Jean needed to make—

the reason that I had come. We did talk
about the difference between courage
and bravery, as we passed

Karen M. Fitzgerald - Fog Light, Remembering Gay

the cookies between us. We watched until
the street lights came on, and the men
were lowered to the ground.

The cookies were long gone, but as we stood
to brush the crumbs away, an Ohio sunset
bathed us all—steeple, crane,

people in the street—in such a tender light,
that in the end I think we decided bravery
would probably be enough.

—Cathryn Essinger

