

Minimum

by [Cara Bertron](#) in the [August 7, 2013](#) issue

My brother makes lists of what he needs to live.  
He is down to a towel, a small rucksack,  
good socks, rice and beans and clementines, and flip-flops  
for strange showers. He wants to be a saint  
and the holiest travel light. Easier to press close  
to God wearing only a thin shirt and holding  
a short list of other loves. He worries, sharp-nosed  
and sweet, how much to treasure a sturdy hat  
or a stack of warm tortillas; he digs his fingers  
into the rocky, well-loved home soil. He'll have to shake it off,  
so's not to be weighed down on his way to heaven.  
In this late night during a visit home, our parents  
snore tenderly in a distant room. We do not speak of loving  
God more than one's family, though we both know  
the rules; we do not speak of knees scarred by prayer.  
Loss and revelation both come in whispers: we do not speak.