

A funeral begins at the church across the street

by [Benjamin Myers](#) in the [June 10, 2015](#) issue

Men and women in black, a few at first and then more, move quickly and silently across the parking lot, like a slow rain beginning to fall into the dark mouth of the sanctuary. A blue jay screams curses from the skirts of a pecan tree.

Then comes the small girl the neighbors call “the urchin,” who spends each day alone flitting around the neighborhood like a trapped moth. She is surrounded by three patchy dogs.

She marches barefoot and chants a little song about the summer morning, three stray dogs, and her very own self. She passes between the mourners, a blade of blue sky cutting through storm cloud.

When she gets home, her mother will still sit like a sea wall in front of the Trinity Broadcasting Network with a can of beer. The urchin will go into the kitchen for a glass of warm tap water. The man in the coffin will still be dead. The mourners

will still gather and be sad. Nothing will be any better. The jay will keep screaming its malediction on the deep down meanness of the world. But, look now, for a moment: the song, the girl, and three loping dogs.