

Anya Krugovoy Silver, poet, dies at age 49

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by [Christian Century staff](#) in the [September 12, 2018](#) issue



Anya Krugovoy Silver

Anya Krugovoy Silver, whose searing poems about family, faith, and cancer [appeared in the \*Christian Century\*](#), among other publications, died August 6 in Macon, Georgia. She was 49.

A 2018 Guggenheim Fellow for Poetry, she taught English literature at Mercer University. Among the four books of poetry she published are *The Ninety-Third Name of God* (2010) and *Second Bloom* (2017).

Her poems related to cancer and its treatment—the way it ravages a body, the relief that a Popsicle can bring—are intertwined with deep, honest questioning of God.

“Making meaning out of suffering and loss,” Silver wrote in a review for the *Century*, is “one of poetry’s most fundamental aims.”

In a poem published two years after her diagnosis with inflammatory breast cancer in 2004, “After the Biopsy,” she wrote:

The pathology report an icon; the tissue  
staining the slide, God’s kaleidoscope.  
And those cells, obeying their DNA,  
cosmic dust as they whirl and split.

And yet she could not see cancer as a gift. The poem continues, addressing Mary, “This same God / took your son away. Help me disobey.”

She gave birth to a son amid her illness, and addressed him in one of her best-known poems, “Psalm 137 for Noah”: “I wanted your infant kisses, your fists clasped / round my neck. . . . I willed you this woe, this world. / You inherited exile for my sake.”