

# Poetry Porch: Poetry

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## **The day my father died**

By Mary Buchinger

I went to the Armory  
Center for the Arts  
and learned to make  
a mandala out of  
sand

Spring was  
converting too then  
the whole ground  
growing soft with  
what was  
coming

A mandala  
made of elements that vary  
and elements that repeat  
guides the eye inward  
and out again

In this  
universe lines asseverate  
symmetry and radial  
balance

in-between-  
spaces wait to be filled with  
color the full meaning to  
emerge as one hue is  
juxtaposed with  
another

I surrendered  
to the material reached  
for red the first color  
to fall off the spectrum

Camouflage for creatures  
in the deep-sea

surely red  
is the color death would

convert into if it were not  
black or white

The sand  
was fine as salt pinched between  
finger and thumb there was

a pattern for grief I tried to  
find it on the square  
of paper

Rainbows  
of salt-sand grew unwieldy  
small dunes unmanageable  
art

My father's life of days  
and minutes ended hours ago  
within this day of hours in  
my life

I tried  
the yellow and the green  
and the blue each had  
something to offer

It should  
have been beautiful but the  
boundaries grew muddy and  
varicose what I tried to fix  
I smudged

a makeshift  
map this letting go