

Library Guardian  
Zaraj Carrucini

Starry-eyed children build me homes with their juice-stained picture books.  
Whimsical middle-schoolers call upon me for an awesome game of tag.  
Exhausted adults swim around me among the lilac dream of novels.  
Angelic elders offer me their humble quiet.  
Affectionate homeless adorn me with their questions about the glorious labyrinth.  
The dogs outside, ha, they bless me with their kisses.  
In this shrine, I am the sole guardian.  
In this temple of knowledge with its husky incense of dust  
its weary visitors are protected from the real world.  
There is no  
pain,  
death,  
war,  
here in this place.  
And when the day ends,  
and the children go home,  
and the adults trudge away,  
and the homeless disappear,  
and the dogs hide under boxes,  
and I must ascend,  
I pray for the people who feel unseen.  
Because while this is a sanctuary free from  
pain,  
death,  
war,  
the book I tuck away the most  
is about grief.  
I pray that they may feel lovingly cradled  
by this *mourning* guardian.