

# New Poetry from Shannon Huffman Polson: “On Orthodox Easter in Mariupol”



BETWEEN THE CRACKS / *image by Amalie Flynn*

## On Orthodox Easter in Mariupol

We finished our jelly beans  
red and yellow, purple, green,  
the last bite of chocolate, unaware

that over in Mariupol  
on this most holy day  
sleepless mothers cradle children  
on a steel factory floor.

Christ is Risen!

But in Mariupol people lie crushed,  
the crossbeam too heavy,  
cold factory chimneys rising cruelly  
against the grey sky.

Nobody steps in from the crowd  
to carry the cross.

There is no crowd  
but circled tanks

in Mariupol.

Where is the Risen Christ  
in Mariupol?

Outside the factory  
mud is drying, small flowers  
pushing up  
between the cracks,  
the birds returning, unaware

that inside people wait  
in darkness,  
the factory made for steel,  
not people—  
they sit  
in vigil,  
waiting.