

[...]

CHRISTINA OLSON

In Tasmania, my brother saw my palm,
said, *You get the holes too!* We have mild dyshidrosis:

little skin blisters, immune to Vaseline or creams.
We compare our peeling hands, this genetic tie.

We have lived a decade of loss without death,
a rehearsal for the real thing. Our father is 72.

He texted my brother and me on Christmas,
unaware that we were abroad. We wrote back

We are in Tasmania on a road trip!
All he wrote was [...], the dot dot dot

that means *I know I should reply, but I don't know
what to type, so I am typing and erasing, typing*

and erasing. Some fathers might write *wow*
or *send pictures!* or *be safe.* Our father wrote [...],

then it disappeared. Then nothing. Weeks later,
after I sent him some photos, he wrote, *That explains*

your cryptic text. It was one of two texts he sent me
in 2019. In another decade, our father will be 82.

After I finish this poem, I will call him
despite the best advice from my therapist.

Most of this decade passed while I was holed up,
taking care of myself, but it's his birthday

and goddamn if I won't try once a year.
He is somewhere on a court in south Florida,

gripping a tennis racket, dropping balls
over the net easily: *thwock, thwock, thwock.*

Three tennis balls drop, roll into the fence.
Three tiny blisters in a row on my left palm:

my very own biological ellipse. Little bubbles.
[.] [..] I don't know what to type.

