None of My Fellow CPR Instructors Have Ever Done CPR

(With the Final Word of Each Line from a poem by Nancy L. Meyer)

Ron Riekki

“When you lie awake at three am, which I know you do”
— Nancy L. Meyer
from Tiny Florets, Bees Hover

They lie. It’s something we all do, tell stories deep into the months of summer, what my boss calls sugar weeks, when there isn’t a day left

blank on the calendar, more work than flowers in Virginia, and I go to the bathroom exhausted, wiping the sweat from my ears

after demonstrating CPR with thick wet hands from the humidity, the students having to stop for fear of heat stroke, air conditioner broken, the wild wind unable to enter with the windows soldered shut. This is yours,
says a student, handing a mask to a fellow nanny, and then they arch their backs to do compressions. I’ve only done CPR once, in the dark, in Detroit, next to a swimming pool, an infant, the oxygen tank refusing to work. After that, for six years, I’d get teary any time I’d kiss.

Reference

Ron Rickki’s books in 2019 include Posttraumatic (Hoot ‘n’ Waddle) and Undocumented (MSU Press).