

## CLAIRE KEYES POETRY AWARD WINNER

*Faith Shearin*

### DARWIN'S DAUGHTER

On the Galapagos Islands Darwin balanced  
on the backs of giant tortoises, began  
noticing variations: the way finches

were different at each port. It is said  
that he lost his faith when he lost  
his daughter, Annie, who liked

to look up words in dictionaries, her finger  
drawn to names on maps;  
she was ten when she died

that late April day: Darwin's  
theory of evolution written  
but still unpublished. Sundays,

during his later years, he went walking  
in the forest while his family sat in church.  
He believed all life was related, descended

from a common ancestor, and he studied  
his samples of plants and animals,  
kept a yellow notebook, had a single

daguerreotype of his daughter in which she  
did not smile, a basket of flowers  
in her lap. He was a scientist and he wrote

his memories of Annie, folded  
them into a labelled box; he described how  
she touched his hair, how she sat

in his study, comparing two editions  
of the same book, word by word.