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## Fragile

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## Hanning: Fragile

FRAGILE

Jenny Hanning

At the Children's Museum they collect pennies in a penny pit. It started as a fountain, but was overwhelmed by wishes. Someone thought it pretty, so the fountain was emptied and disposed of. In its place, a trench installed. There's a little plaque: *A million and counting!* My heartbeat changes to an uphill pace. And counting. When I was a child I used to say everything twice, first to myself then aloud. Words are such fragile things. To speak them is always to risk them. The fountain was downgraded to a memory, the world is quickly overrun. In Florida, where the sea turtles hatch on a beach that stretches alongside the highway, they've changed the bulbs in all the streetlamps. The color of the light drew the new turtles out onto the blacktop and they were flattened like acorns on a playground. The light is more yellow now, or was more yellow, and is now more white. It's so easy to say the wrong thing. To say something that's incorrect. We should all be careful. *A million and counting!* At the Children's Museum the mothers go through their pocketbooks. They come up with linty fistfuls. Fistfuls, and the children throw.