



Image: "Graphing Uncertainty V" by Christine Crockett. "Things That Collapse" was written by Jonathan Harris for *Rattle's* Ekphrastic Challenge, February 2024, and selected as the Artist's Choice.

THINGS THAT COLLAPSE

poem by Jonathan Harris

Slumped in a lawn chair under a pink umbrella a hand fan on his belly
in a jackknifing heat that's me I see now and those are my children
coming for me from our rose bed gone-under. They lay me
on the earth and fall in tight my son at my heart splitting
stones on my chest. On her knees and cell with 911
my daughter traces half/faces the wrinkles
on my forehead. She bends closer after
ending the call coos in my ear ruffling
her ringlets: orphans, origami, tents,
tables, tarantulas, hammocks,
accordions, waves. At least
those are the notes I'm
vaguely aware of
but find hard to
swallow.

A
slap on the cheek a shrug by my shoulders my children
cry out: Dad! Dad! Don't leave us! Don't you dare
leave us! Then together scoop me up
in their arms and won't let go as if
everything in our top-down top-
heavy world hinges
on the screws
holding.