**Since We Never Had Language**

Amy Beveridge

it took operas and songs of exile

in other tongues—words turned space, color.

And now, this body—

all you’ve ever been—is a tangle

of knots fraying and tightening, a loose puppetry

of hips, ribs, sockets. You little coin purse,

sueded leather and clasps of spine,

leaning limp in your patchy brocade.

Yesterday I saw a bird geranium-red,

another an oil-slick blue. Wildflowers

lined the trail, elms and alfalfa saturated

green from storms, thunderheads startlingly

white against a washed sky. You’ve rarely left

any threshold, don’t know scale or weather.

White fist of cotton blurred in my periphery,

you first stumbled in fallen leaves.

There’s a gate I can open

for your sun-soaked heart, galloping

rhythm under thin pink skin. There’s a slip

of time we can pass you through,

like paper. Too soon with joy unspent.

Too late with your pain. Run with me

beside this train, jump, not yet, not yet—now,

between two boxcars joined by a knot,

a clasp of metal on metal: here, in this space,

sparking like a flint under your body.