**Aurora Australis**

*for Charles*

Betsy Mars

You extended an olive branch –

I might have called them leaves –

your writing – capillaries,

a transparent filigree.

A red-tied bundle of letters,

bound like a deep vein thrombosis

waiting to strike. Light lines

on skin blue paper –

some went up like kindling –

a fire to smoke out my demons;

the rest I kept in a shoebox of our artifacts,

a kind of love museum.

You engineered an expert knot,

a string as thick as blood

pooled in my heart,

thin as thermosphere

when you fell, apart.