**Obituary**

Kari Gunter-Seymour

Midnight seeps the cracks.

I cannot for the life of me conjure

the scent of hay, spicy sweet,

stacked high inside the barn before frost.

I suspect my nesting place is still there,

some other father tending the tractor,

some other mother baking cornbread,

frying bacon to flavor the beans.

Some other daughter who prefers

sunbeams slanting the loft, Sylvia Plath,

and dusty brown sheep.

I’ve spent the day staring down

this blank page, bones on fire,

wrung out so dry I can’t siphon a tear.

How many words, dressed in apologies

and alibis, to represent a life,

at twenty-five cents each?

In the space between sighs, walls fade

to meadow, a blue cloudless sky.

Mother’s breaths are scant, labored,

I kiss her forehead, tuck a wayward curl,

sing the way of morning birds, deep, throaty,

leave her resting on a bed of wildflowers,

hayfields swaying tawny in the sun.