**The Long Vowel**

Katrina Hays

An adult adrift in my childhood bed,

I hear my parents through the wall:

tenor mutter met by alto murmur.

I listen to the sling and mumble,

the sound of water

running over stones.

He is river;

his course dictated

by the banks of logic.

She is waterfall;

she is language that tumbles

in lyric and line.

If they are source, then what am I,

bound by blood salts

and limestone bone?

The ceiling peels back;

Polaris beckons.

The bed becomes a barque—

I raise a canvas wing

and sail to open sea

where I slip beneath the surface

and remember the song,

the long and sustained

vowel of water.