**The Voice Lesson**

Leonore Hildebrandt

When I enter the house, a small dog charges and yips.

She cries, “Bongo, Bongo,” adding to the tumult.

My teacher’s assertion is matched by her dress,

which flows from the Rubenesque breasts in charming disarray.

Where I come from, we take shallow breaths

not to disturb the ways of propriety.

As a result, habit is strung tight around my chest.

Massive air columns weigh on my throat.

She cuts through all of that: “Practice

to focus the sound––horizontal, even.”

Vocal folds vibrate neither high nor low, she says.

Air waves swell and subside driven by clear thought.

Her jewelry sparkles. Her chest widens

and muscles. “Imagine a life vest.

Imagine the vent pipe of a dryer.” My teacher

loves me enough to believe it can be done.