**Daughter**

Meghan Sterling

I dream that the earth is on fire beneath us—

that is what love is. How I take you

into myself as though you are the petal

pink to the open hand, a plum stone sweet.

And what was broken opens wide,

All the things I never knew or felt in an explosion

That feels like pain, but is fear and a terrible hunger

to save all this for you to live in,

an ocean that asks for tenderness,

a sky that begs for quiet.

How the waves of your soft hair

are all that stills the thrashing of a heart

that’s been drowned and drowned,

a million times over.

How I need you to be safe,

your face already a memory,

as though the smoke from a burn-pile

has created its sepia-tone.