**No One’s Here More Than You**

Sarah Cipullo

 I push your name out of my bed each morning. It sits with me at my desk to work, I put it on the table for lunch and dinner, in my pocket when I go to the theater.

 Your name is never shaped breath, but I carefully place it in the shopping cart at the supermarket, I spread it out on clotheslines. It was between my open hands yesterday at a concert. In a dark room with a few neon lights while I was distractedly touching the body of another woman. There was my presence with her. Plus the absence of something. That is, my presence and your absence. That is, me and a very thin pain. I pictured opening your mouth with my index and middle fingers and I gave her a kiss that wasn't ours. No one around has suffered from it.

 This morning she opened her eyes, and her head was resting on my pillow. Holding the sheet tight to her chest, she turned to me. “What’s your name?” she asked.

 I looked at her, looking for you in the rim of her eyes, in the corner of her lips. And your name got stranded. My brain, my flesh, my blood, my nerve tissue, held it together. Your name is out of every discourse, of every articulated sentence, but it was already in my vertebrae. It’s light in a dark town, water among the branches, it cracks along the exposed cables of my head and grows in every other noun, verb and adjective. I can't live, not even for a moment, an empty word. It must have been for this reason that your name flourished between my tongue and palate when I answered her back: "Margherita."

 I placed it on her lips and injected it in her thoughts.

 You’ll come out as light air when she’ll tell her friends that I don’t want to meet her again.