

Albert Goldbarth

The Extension

It will travel so far
from here and still
be here—a river

is like that, a mystic
whose body is only
one point on a long and

continuous journey.

Maybe something remains
when the rest of us hardens

into the kind of people who go
to war, and this is why later,
it's over, we can lift

the aluminum watering can
in light touched green
by all that's soft around it,

green and pithsugar sweet, we
lift and let the water break
with ease that refuses ideas

of discontinuity. In a garden
once, a dove rose
from its perch and remained

on its perch—two doves,
I guess. A trick of light. One made
a mime's glove in the sky, doing

quest and freneticism. I guess
we're each two doves
of ourselves. I guess we're waiting

more often than not for the other's
return with the flowering
twig in its beak, the other

one of ourselves, the extension.

Light makes me think of it
here, and the gloves, and the masks,

and the flutterings. Nothing
moves beyond a fluttering, though these
flutterings mean vast distance. Yes, and you

in the hospital bed, you, mottled
red and purple, mottled like army
camouflaging—heading the way

into enemy country for us.