

Crimes

Lying awake this winter
charting the dark inside, sure
something grows here

like mildew, like milkweed, like foxfire.
Rising by snow-light
for a glimpse of the road,

the mile marker.
If it's buried, I'm afraid.
I can too easily imagine the future

that will erase me,
where my son disappears.
He will forget so much.

In the songs about the stars
that finally ushered him to sleep,
he will remember my failures,

map a course that takes him nowhere,
believing himself the first,
unless the wind uncovers glass

going back to sand, the alchemized
campsites of the poor in spirit.
If he finds a shard

big enough to let the fire flare
into fire, if he kneels there
for a moment, satisfied,

this act of faith won't save him.
To claim the present only

is to be afraid of dying,

like a room for the night to sleep in.

The spring morning he was born
the pain was nothing

if not a crime against that young body,
my life changed utterly. Yet love
found me angry at no more

than the light dividing us.

Now when I open his letters, see my name
in his small hand pronounced there,

I'm homesick for the girl I was.

At twenty, she would address
anything that hurt her

which kept her somehow free
to watch the sun running the furrows
of standing water, the cowbirds lifting

above the barn where she walked mornings
in her father's orchards,
the boy too real in her arms.