

## House Call

Seventy years ago, the once I went with him,  
I was twelve years old. I waited for hours  
outside the house with the mare and buggy.  
I waited until the bullfrogs' croup worsened,  
and the crickets commenced the humid chill  
of that dusk. Boulders bled into it.  
In the failing distance, consumptive buzzards  
hunched over what I could not see. I waved  
away a rash of gnats. An owl beat past,  
struggling with what would be heaved up by dawn:  
a bloodless sphere of hair and indefinite  
bone. I must have slept, because then it was  
morning, and he was there — in his pocket  
the slim, glass vein that had lain beneath  
my tongue, too, its blood risen and measured —  
and we were moving past what I believed  
convalescent fields. That one time, the crows'  
raucous cough was eased, and we were all wing-  
deep in quiet beneath the pale, distemperate sky.