Drifting

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Drifting
By Nan Byrne

On the bed my eyes closed
I am letting drift take me
I am remembering Mrs. Buffington
She said Canader instead of Canada
and told me once that Gillian Armistead
was a less than brilliant girl
And I am hearing my mother say,
All rich people are happy because
of the money have you ever noticed
the sidewalks of Boston look like
Brooklyn when the snow melts?
That your dreams can turn you into a horse
But only life can turn you into an ass
Texas men like ten gallon hats
and turquoise belts and Texas women
wear mink coats over spandex
but no one wears a girdle anymore
or likes leftovers or knows what do
with a panic-stricken canary or
how to respond to the pause
between words that white space
the opacity where something else needs to be said
something that you only know you’re missing
when those reticular fragments
are floating past your eyes and you
are trying to make some sense
but all you can make are connections
The garnishments of words are not images
The rivers of the world are not the waters of the world
Evening shade is not night
Childbirth is like a week with two Sundays
And if I were a fork and not a knife I might be of use
my father said before he cut and ran
His pallbearers were all men of the cloth
each one a preacher telling us the good news
God we waited and waited for the epilogue
but someone turned out the lights
and sleep came softly