

Conversion

He is focused, forehead wrinkled,
lips tentative with the sandwich

of salty, marbled ham,

a fallen frond of hair over the biopsy's indentation
from thirty years ago,
today.

I savor his careful swallows,
breath's sounds, slowness. For him

there is no *why?* No *what if*

it hadn't happened? No
suffering.

When he finishes, he looks at me, smiles.
Daughter, he says. I don't know

what he sees, but I return

his gaze.
I return all of it,

all of what he offers, and all

that he cannot,

not questioning
will it stay

or *is it true?* I simply reach
across

thought's threshold,
toward what light reflects

from the sea that joins.

Impermanence

I first saw the bull's-eye
around my mother's face

as I was being put to bed;
a shadow, cast

through a window
from some other place.

Dim, but perfect,
concentric rings

narrowing to an opening
around her gaze.

To this day, I move my hands

through its dusky circles.

Mnemonic

Sable for its face, *cobalt* for chest and wings

and ballpoint words, spiraling

around it, as if its nest
was going up in smoke.

His full name, his wife's;
his social security number;

street address, telephone number
of the house
where they once lived.

The rest,
the vast,

swan-white, pocked, and thirsty
page,

lay untouched.
Draw a picture

they said

of all that you remember now.

Alphabet, after Heavy Rain and Thunder

Here's another lesson
from pain

From a power line, a robin sings
after the rain

in dewy silence

chid di duk
chid di duk

chdildi

goes the streak of sound, insistent
as a rusty hinge

It's the same

Then longing

as if in a window's
condensation

traces

makes its shapes

and letters

Come Find Me

He was fierce, after the brain damage.
When they let him out of the hospital

he broke free, and ran.

And as he disappeared
around a corner, he grinned

at her, his wife,
as if to say I am

still here, come find me.