

The Library Again

Now in the home thinking of any home
 maybe the orphanage from that box of pictures
 we all pretend we never saw
 she reads a sloppy circle
 through a book about Lewis and Clark

The story is new each time

Imagine her daily firstness
 birthing names for things she forgets
 even as she holds them to the light

Lewis and Clark for me is school
 the year the fat came There was a diorama
 with Ken dolls and of course everyone laughed
 I would opt out of remembering that now
 I would unsubscribe
 and try the always
 undiscovered

She says to my mother Someday soon
 I must meet your husband
 This part is willful I imagine

She hangs back
 from what she didn't love the man who
 wore jeans called dungarees
 drank pop from right from a can
 came bearing Catholics
 Now look
 she has never met him and someday soon she must
 My father is pleased
 to be anticipated and he forgives her a bit

But she must want certain parts
 Spikes of panic stab through the evenings
 Terror at sundown is to be expected
 the doctors tell us
 Terror I think is rational
 Like the time I lost sight of my girl at the mall
 Where did my girl go and who the hell are you
 you who are not my girl
 When she came back we shook through the hug

Today grandma tells me of river mapping
She is back to that chapter and has no fear
of what lies ahead The worst is coming I want to say
 but warnings are pointless
 She digs busily at a mud-stuck bend

where she turns earthworm refeasting the soil
All progress is collapse the undone hard by
the done

 No one can tell which is which

She whose hands were clean always whose garden was a perfect lawn
 the lawn someone else's job
She heads towards earthen
Soon she will forget to be alive
 Her heart and lungs made strangers

The doctors remind me as I go that
memory is a mystery
as though doctors alone
 knew that