

JOHN SAMUEL TIEMAN

*4 a.m.*

I

like a leaf which wishes to drop  
at the foot of the tree and become, for the sake of the tree, some small feast  
there is a life I long to give back  
like Li Po folding his poems and floating them downstream only to be  
retrieved by someone who loved poems perhaps or paper boats or just Li Po  
there is something I wish to give my wife, something which is neither  
yowl nor vow

II

my wife speaking in her sleep  
speaks in a secret language like English but a glossolalia  
known only to her and God and  
me as I marvel  
my wife breathing in when  
she stops and for 7 seconds I know all there is to know  
about love and the meaning of love and loss and all there is to lose  
and she breathes again and again I know God  
by her silence, for example, how my wife's silence is then  
how my wife's 4 a.m. silence is all I need of silence and God's gift of silence  
which is to say  
her skin amid all the dark