

## SPENDING MY BREATH

I spend my breath on words like *worth*,  
on lisps and lays of urgent business

when a really free agent lets the all-new signals  
filibuster her loose-leaf solos

with spiky or lush halftime concertos  
of yellow rudbeckia, notch-tipped, self-sown

between radio jingles we love like butter,  
sing with feeling, rattling our bottlecaps,

and later try to delete and forget  
and enter the Holocene. If the lamina of man

97

are of vessels for water—  
hydria, holy font, polyethylene—

where does our talking amber in?  
See-through stitching between two magnets,

the whistling mills, the wingless note—  
arrow in? Talk utters out.

Say the tongue's sudden sabbatical  
gives us five white gulls, five surrogate selves.

Say five gulls don't speak of lift,  
winter here a working season.

Let me learn to wear my vanishing,  
my one bespoke garment, just as lightly,  
  
once a grain in Wyoming Province,  
now a new vowel in the rift of my mouth.