

THE COMMONWHEEL

I stepped outside the circle,
tired of being pinched and bruised
by the emotions our family used
as telephones to say don't change.

For years they yawned while I pushed out
my suspenders like empty wings.
I heard them name things and they'd harden.

So I sleep inside hunger
like a grain of rice and wait
for the cold to tear its shell off.

I live like the wrong answer
among neighbors with heart attacks
and cancer. They damn me, slam their doors
and collect pride from bitter labors.

I should step inside and make believe
the things they've bought can hold me
like some force carved out of living things.

Then I will load myself down
and exchange faces with these strangers
who complain of seeing twice, not deep.