

CHASE TWICHELL

A Lamb By Its Ma

Just before it rains, the lilacs
thrash weakly,
storm light heightening
the clusters drooping
at their peak of scent,
wind running
through them like slow water,
then a splash, mood swing:
leaves spangled with drops
of light from inside the storm.
Mary made us come inside
if there was lightning,
flapping a white towel
to call us back.
We hung around the kitchen
drinking tea till it cleared.
She brought us tea at bedtime.
*A good cup of black tea,
and you'll sleep like a lamb by its ma.*
She told us that our parents
loved us, that their war
was theirs alone.
She said it in the charged air,
in the scent of their absence
from the house,
their clean absence.
If thunder came at night,
she told about the brave
and faithful dogs of Scotland,
how a shepherd knows
where his lamb has gone
by bits of wool in the wire.