

MARJORIE STELMACH

Tourist

If she could sit like stone
on this stone ledge,
steep wind tearing

her hair back, knees
sealed to clavicle, shins
in a tight forearm-grip—

a paperclip of flesh—
how long
would leaving take?

Her breath would slow
to nearly nothing. Her heart, as well.
Her arms would loosen,

open. Her heat
would dissipate,
and with it, words:

*storm-clouds, solitude,
sit like stone,
the failed instruction,*

*rise:
use every trace of
everything you have*

to rise.
If she could sit
past *rise*—

Birds would venture in
to carry off her flesh,
the threads of rotting cloth.

In time
her stone-colored bones,
unfolded, would lie

beyond the hungers, lie
where other lives
had moved them;

would polish, powder,
sift into
the elements;

would chase
the four directions down;
would wheel within wheels, pass

through the fire-flash of days
and out
onto night's plains:

day on night, black ice
on wing, shadow on mandible,
carapace on seed;

through settle, to toss,
to rest again—arrived
in the gaze

of all the gazes—
life-sized and
other-wise.