

Some Givens

Sometimes one of us looks away,
a flick toward the window, a slow car
bulging in the hips of a green bottle,
chords of silence booming off the walls.

Brightness I notice is harder to open than
the dark, it won't be entered, leaves us
retreating sidelong into collars of shade.

Sometimes I come alive in the long hours
of an afternoon and have to think about
the reflex to hold it at bay, must decide,
make the decision, palm flat on the table.

Warmth it seems is harder to distance than
the cold, which does not want us, pushes us
out with the fleet pulse charging our skins.

Sometimes I wake up wild under your touch.
Sun over the rooftops storming into this room,
stapling everything to place with shadows.

Sometimes I still think I hear their voices
beyond the envelope of their absence,
unlike those times I overhear you talking
to nobody in another room, unlike when
laughter in this kitchen evaporates in echoes.

It shouldn't be said, but sometimes I open
myself to the melodies and poems that would
flourish around you even if I were gone.

This time I am the one looking away.

—Andrew Vogel