

My mother gave me hands sharp enough to sculpt lighthouses out of anything that collapsed.
You told me there is no way I can be the color of rain, no way I can speak in anatomical dioramas
or the hollow fingers
wrapped around doorknobs
I can no longer open.

Sweetheart, remember when we drove to the repainted grain silo
by the highway to bury a box of dead birds, *Welcome to Mansfield, Ohio*
hued in vibrant blues & reds, & we watched downtown
fall from the noon skyline?

You said *I once knew all of this*,
like the pianist in you,
after months of not playing,

arching your back over the grand piano
in your living room,
resting your aching body on the bench.

Please tell me there is more than the thousand specks of touch I have lost.
Tell me there are people who still believe in the smallest acts of love,

like you on our front porch,
holding a lantern to guide me
into the church you built out of your arms—

I have grown so tired of using my teeth as light.
My hands can only hold so much.

Behind a door, alien beeps of computerized death
machines sing like wind beating against paper hospital gowns.

The electromyogram connected to the wall: a pink-plated robot
with a thousand tentacles soon to be hooked up to my numb skin—
jolts of tiny mayflies ready to nibble at the angel-hair axons coiled
around my foreign bones.

It is not too late to call ourselves a colony ~ brilliance ~ dole ~ tower ~ anything we can to soften
the ache. Please, I'm begging you, please, kiss the bruises on my knuckles

before they bloom
into wounds made of ghosts.