

Last Night in Rapid City

Todd Williams

She finds herself in transition,
calls of Canada geese falling
like breadcrumbs across still waters
while ripples rise to greet the gloaming,
wind ruffled songs drowning out
remnants of dried leaves and cattails
bent by gravities greater
than an earthly body can bear.

Once a girl, a woman, and wife,
she embraces the becoming
with trembling papier-mâché hands
and one good eye cast toward the light,
its soft yellow glow warming her more
than whispered greetings and blankets
piled high at the foot of the bed,
all four walls fading fast away.

Here, she lists toward unfamiliar
shores, shedding the thread of a life
bound by biology, and faith, and fear
before calling out one time
to a sister seven years passed,
“Not yet, Betty Lou. No! Not yet.”
Just beyond her door, a nurse bows
in reverence to the unknowable.