

Simon Perchik

Where the sky dries up  
these sunflowers scale back  
though just as easily

you could take a chance  
trap this rain left over  
growing wild the way each petal

breathes in while laying down  
where your mouth would be  
come from a name

written on a tree  
clasping it and the sun  
not yet a wound that oozes

–you could drink from a slope  
and place by place tame this mud  
to bend, gather in wells

scented with melting stones  
and the darkness  
you no longer want to stop.

Even before you touch  
it has lift, rushes more air  
over one hand and not the other

though once at the controls  
spin is what you cling to  
letting the knob drag the door

the way moonlight never leaves  
has nothing to do with skies  
closing in on each other

half rivers, half mountainsides, half  
whatever you hold in your arms  
is stone, counts the turns and when.

A jacket could trick my arms  
help me forget once they leave  
though what I become

has lips and around each shoulder  
both sleeves fit the way skies  
still overflow, break free

settle down, neatened  
as if this mirror was still looking  
could hear, *I don't see you, louder.*

You hover the way each memory  
stands by –the faintest scent  
breathes down your brain

till its dust reeks from moonlight  
and you cover your arms with air  
holding them down, drag this table

more than enough for clouds  
and though nothing falls  
you're sure it's safe to exhale

making room in your heart  
for the smell from skies  
and what they too wanted back.

Its shadow is helpless here  
festering the way your fingers  
lean over the watermarks

not yet covered with paper  
though left in the open  
this wall could heal, the butterflies

gently circling down  
and under the painted leaves  
the empty branches and wings

–you thin this paste  
as if one arm works the other  
till what you turn in

unfolds toward painful corners  
and days without a sea  
making room for you.