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No Words

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NO WORDS

There are no words for
the thimble keeping time
against my thumb like a tiny heart
or the sad Italian tune
my father played as a boy or
grandma weeping with her rosary
in the dark house

the prayer burrows deep
the round crater between thumb and
forefinger the black keys ever rising
above the white no words for
the oldest tree

or this daughter fanning her face
with the pages of a paperback
tapping her foot to a song with no words
to equal all the words she's hung on
for the sake of emotion: that old bird
with a thimble for a head

all the words my mother saved for years
each in a black bead
breaking into my veins
through the tips of my fingers
no words for all the words
in my father's eyes the hospital bed
or the darkness of my room
the V of birds caught in
mama's throat like a fork
or the sad horns of soul
a tree simply heavy with rain
daddy wanting to buy an organ
mama wanting to sing something