Listening to One Thing at a Time

Harry Humes
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Say it is evening and a neighbor's hardwoods
float on the mosquito mist rising from the fields,

or morning and a woman sits on a bed
in a black dress twisting her fingers around and around

and talking of white blossoms,
say it is the air picking up speed

and the season unfolding like a shape you almost miss.
Maybe the woman is now by a table

studying the red-winged blackbirds
calling above the hickory and mint.

Say there is a road north with foxglove and lobelia,
that it's only the whistling

behind the crockery of late afternoon
or just before dawn that causes her to pause

and for a moment remember a single sound
like ice sliding into Baffin Bay,

the green note of memory this blue day
singing through a grain of dust.