

Stephanie Anderson

An Open Bird

I wait for you, my bare feet cold
against the porch's morning cement.
I imagine you flying over the horizon
as I watch the backyard birds fly closer –
the fence will not hold them in.

But can I write what does not happen?
For these words are merely hairpins
trying to secure my uplifted hair,
as I pull them from my teeth.

Sun's day moves shadows about me
edges my toes, taps my shoulders;
but I gather dust,
and push those hands away.
I do not know how many hours
have tried to wake me.

Like the backyard birds
laughing at the wire (never
meant to hold them in), they farewell,
lifting their light wings:
only in thought can I capture you.

From my hair I pull the pins out,
make them flap against the sky.
I let the sun rest on my skin
and burn it too –
just as it burned you
when your arms refused to close,

because I am steeped
with an indomitable fire
that no soft air can tame.