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## Drawing a Breath

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## DRAWING A BREATH

### I.

For twenty years, she slept  
twenty hours a day. The hawk,  
its gaze, woke her. An egg ached  
incurably in her head. Daily,  
she balanced the bun, the china  
doll—she walked deliberately—  
might fall. A son died

nevertheless and shone  
the next morning, a faint  
pink behind the clouds.  
She felt no further  
way to grieve.  
She consulted a mirror  
and all things receded  
from her eyes; her feet  
were far away.

### II.

Grandma Layton perches her husband  
in a tree, to draw a nest. A pad  
of cheap paper in her fat lap. A fist  
of pencils. She sighs so the leaves  
flutter round the shape of that old  
man. She draws without looking,  
at the paper, away from him,  
an honest line.

III.

The breasts, the checks  
in the old house dress  
press against the view.  
A delicate distortion  
enters the breeze,  
the tree in Kansas.

The jonquils  
loom, the limbs  
tremble, the face  
wrinkles, the wings  
fold, to fit the shell.

It is the air  
holds him up, the birds  
that gather  
her wisps of hair.