

# Goldfish

Hannah Pritchard

Shadows breaking away, I bide  
time, hold tongue to cheek,  
keep breath from leaving. Left  
palm touching glass, right  
fingers grasping air, nothing but  
dust stirred whirling, windowbeam  
casting molds of a room turned  
colorless with light. Fleeting

and understood,  
missed in midair  
as my promises often are; words  
said as whispers turn stony,  
sink to tank bottom, disturb goldfish.

I do not rip out my heart, but pull  
at it tenderly, so as not to break  
the bulb. Uprooted,  
I try not to be frightened  
by the emptiness under my feet.

Altitude takes pressure with it,  
pulls apart tin cans and lifts paper  
from the table, steals my words  
and draws water out of my chest.

I hold tongue to cheek, press  
quiet into my palms like  
pieces of bread, try not to let  
my eyes close too heavy, keep  
vision from leaving in the dust,  
bind sound to sense, set  
future down on red stovetop,  
break beat with hard-trained jaw.