

WATER AND STONE

*Who knows if there even is a right way to do things?
Maybe I was wrong. Oh, I'm guileless, palms wide,
careful to ease the time-fold between my eyes;
It bears witness that I'm angry, when I'm not.*

I'm not. And here on the bright grass, air stirring
all around, a bird's cry and silvery balloons, there, weighted
by a stone, you'd think we could talk for once, that he'd crack
that dry silence, tell me, *Don't worry, then, we all
make mistakes.* Or he could simply touch my hand, trace
the lifelines on the palm, or let his lashes move against
my skin and I would know. I'm listening. But it's a silence
that won't be broken; not like rock after all, but fluid, filling
every crack and finding its own level, its surface as perfect and
shining as the brown skin of the pond. A man is watching from
the shadow, jangling keys: the gates must close,
the bird has flown, the scent of ripening flowers is heavy
on the darkening grass.

*They never speak, the guard would like to tell me. Their silence
is what holds against the steady push of stone.* But his shift
is ending and his poor feet ache, or his wife's on graveyard,
or the baby's sick, and I am kneeling on the grass, calling out
in a language never spoken anymore.

- Anna Scotti