

American Robin

Kayleigh Cline

Somewhere else, corpses of glass-slapped starlings
are gathered on a white sheet in a skyscraper's shadow.

Victims of modern architecture, but this robin chose
to challenge his own reflection—now he's splayed

on the gravel in my flower bed, blinking, fighting
to drive back the absence in his eyes, like you did:

blinking up from the rocks after your sudden slide
down that cliff. I will need a shoebox for this robin

to keep him safe from cats while he recovers
or to bury him. Your stunned face lost its slack,

you struggled to your feet, I told you to lie down, and I knew,
I knew it had to be serious because, for once, you listened.

Poetry

The robin has pulled his wings against his body now—
a good sign? Either way, more dignified. I ran behind

the ATV while you were towed on a spinal board,
not too immobilized for the occasional thumbs-up,

returning us to what we had always been. Our childhood:
this running after you, taking down toys for you

from too-high shelves, stopping on every tree branch
to pull you up beside me: maybe you were not my whole world

but you are still a reflex, a habit. I will tuck the shoebox
beneath the dogwood. This robin needs time to fly again,

but I will not look inside until the morning.
I think.