

THE QUARRY

Ceilidh Newbury

my grandmother's charm bracelet

my inheritance part one

the fourth time we meet it isn't in person
it's in my inheritance
a chain that threads little silver pieces of you
i run them cold through my fingers and try
to hold your hand

the hedgehog

the hedgehog is a mother with spines like nails
to protect her children your four stubborn sons

you're in a new house this third time frail and shrinking
nervous to touch you lest like moth dust i wipe away something important
but in old photos you are fierce

a silver sixpence in her shoe

the end of a rhyme something borrowed
from the british i had to look it up no one could explain this charm
if true your father tucked the coin into your shoe and watched
you limp on blistered heel into your (un)happy future

the lamp

god's word was a lamp that guided you to start
you lived a little lost your faith forgotten in a box of memories or stuffed
behind the couch cushions of your heart
life was too hard to keep it you saw too much
to believe

the bells

two bells tied as one with a ribbon unbreakable
charms clink like wedding bells chimed
broken not long ago before i knew him and now you follow
finally two bells are one again

the well

wet your lips with the freshly pulled water or
give it back to the earth so new life will bloom
my second time in your house your son is upset
you've been working in the garden again last time you
fell so he scolds you like you are a child
you wink at me and smile

the scales

september twenty seven i guess you were a libra
can't believe i didn't know that until now

born nineteen thirty-two seems so far away you were witness to a world torn up
became our lady justice keeping balance keeping peace keeping contact
keeping us together
and apart

your bible is locked

away inside you there was too much war
countries cities children cheating husbands chasing women
you snuffed that light
one your sons never lit
no one read the book over your grave but they never would have anyway

the crown

queen of miskin street and newburys reigning from across the seas but
no one believes in monarchy anymore
my first sight you sit royal clasping shaking hands and staring through cataract eyes
maybe i should curtsy but instead i sit and cross my arms and hope
you love me

my inheritance part two

there's something else in this bag
another inheritance i would pass down if i wanted children
a ring
gold and fragile so small it doesn't fit my fingers
like that bracelet couldn't fit your life and i remember now
i don't know you