

*Kestrel*

## **May It Be a Blessing**

I give myself names like sour plums.  
They sit in my mouth until my tongue  
is bare and soft as the underside  
of my arm. I can lift this tongue  
to speak, to call myself out:  
Neuropathway and Midriff, Plump  
Upper lip, Crooked. I am these things  
and more, I wear my hair cut straight  
across my forehead and even  
in the rain, it stays there,  
line of the horizon and me with every  
word a name I'll call myself. How long  
did my mother wait to speak me into something,  
noun of my existence like the most common  
house sparrow. How caged, my name,  
feminine. We respect our names in these  
parts, how they harken biblical, dissolve us  
into a line of names. My name is gone,  
purple. I give myself a shadow name:  
Farce and Pickle. Name like Holy Water:  
Baptism. My name is.