

## Role Models      by Finnian Sawyer

In the first year of my divorce  
I read Didion. Consider the death  
of unmet expectations: crocuses  
fail to erupt in the garden of the house  
you do not live in. He attends parties,  
takes up new hobbies, buys  
a bicycle. You are asked in low tones  
whether you have children. Thank  
God, breath heavy into your lack.  
Studiously unmet eyes, a greening  
of life in a better place, one you are  
not in. It makes no difference  
who left. Sinks and sliding doors  
fail to respond. The house is full  
of echoes. Fingerprints dot the walls.

In the second year of my divorce  
I read Chopin. I had carved pieces  
of flesh out of myself, chunks ragged  
as sin, and my thumb barely grazed  
the slicing surface of his teeth. Now  
I packed sand into the wells, grit  
to promote growth. I worried the grains,  
ruminated a new pearl in each deep  
and my tongue rose soft to meet it.  
When I amassed value I stole  
into the silence below waves. No one  
followed. My voice rang in my ears.