

Steve Kronen

Our Courtship

Sweetheart, your half-lit house this Sunday, bees manic
in their trees, the hard summer light light-years
from here, and those birds who'd braved the Atlantic—

pastelled, exhausted, calling from their perch
of branch that ran outside your screen, peered
down at you there, book-quiet on your porch,

gargoyle-hunched before your crossword puzzle.
An open dictionary lay between your open legs
and you tap-tapped your forehead, nibbled on your pencil

and, leaning, placed letters in each square as if, in a barnyard,
a chicken farmer had knelt and placed eggs
one by one in a carton with such Christian Barnard

care, no light might flash above the patient's head
as when we two lifted tiny organs from the patient in Operation
somewhere now on a shelf in my parents' backyard shed.

A shed no larger than the stable where an adorable
mangered Jesus cooed like pigeons in the rafters. Such palliations—
ur-whispers. I broke flowers from the bushes and rang your doorbell

straightening my tie as if I'd now explain the gospels,
wiping my feet on the mat at the door
as a bull might before the matador, or like the matador,

upright before those eyes, the flared nostrils.

Sonogram

And once, through the fog of that gray photo,
she sucked deeply, as from a bottle,
and life, it seemed, for the quaffing,
was eternal. She, who steered kingdom
to kingdom, marking with a risen thumb
star and horizon, set us laughing.
For we had been blessed
and seemed to drink from her fetal
tap, enough to induce forgetfulness,
and believe the potion wasn't lethal.