My Words Come Back
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In the Garbled Language of Dementia
A small, dark, steel coil and its detached tongue
go on and on
like song within a trinket box.

For years even my mother chose to believe
heaven had scrubbed itself blue and forgetful.

More than once she must have heard it,
Go on, it’s over,
whispering in all that wreckage.

Cento Sources: Genevieve DeGuzman, Rosanna Warren,
Jacqueline Woodson, Nicole Caruso Garcia, Sarah Bates,
Cory Hutchinson-Reuss, Lara Egger, Miles Waggener,
John Amen

While I’m inside this darkness I can see
along a giant whip,
sashes of grief whipping my back,
the threads pulled fine.

I do not care about religion
but I see it more like
the soft cold lips of belief,
so cold and so
hard, as so much is.

Cento Sources: Elizabeth Hazen,
Matthew Dickman, Shanan Ballam,
Jody Burke-Kaiser, Anonymous (Psalm 131),
Robin Shectman, Eileen G’Sell, Denise Levertov,
Laura Jensen

Life Lesson
Keep your hand rounded as if it held a peach,
something in its pink, the exact shade
—
an answer to memory’s soft slippage.

Renewal
It is spring and I am capable of anything.

From the confusing higgledy-piggledy,
chaos is what I see.

Thank God some things stay the same—
blue, the most grateful color,
so confusingly beautiful that it makes itself
into a new life.

This and my heart beside.
that perfect word.
that old metaphor.
her heart was red as anything
—
that old metaphor,
that perfect word.

In the end