

HENRI COLE

Eating Figs Under the White Rocks

You were saying something about your father,
whose hair you'd shampooed that morning.

The dogs were gamboling on the lawn.
Three pines stood immense, like your brothers, before us.

Honeybees, vaguely eupeptic, made arabesques in the lavender.
Clippings from your father's nails littered the patio.

A figure moved through the emerald pool,
swimming as across a Japanese screen.

The planted pots of Love-lies-bleeding
spoke only of loss to the blue hummingbird that wanted them.

Telephone wires made a score in the sky
the terrible grackles could not sing.

Pink powder balls on the mimosa tossed in the wind,
pretending to dust a dowager's cheeks.

Head and body withdrawn, or almost, a mollusk
inscribed something neither you nor I could read

on a giant sunflower's leaf,
unless, that is, it only said what we'd always known:

that unlike the chorus of molting cicadas
transmitting on wavelengths far off as Eden,

none of us—not your father napping in a slingchair
or even you, who would betray me—could ever return again.

