

ELANA WOLFF

STRAND

Love is not a word that comes amenably from my mouth.
It stalls at the palate, or further back—in the brain,
at the hippocampus. Someone was saying something

about the system and booming through it, the bobbing
waters & falling under their spell; that conchs are shellfish
coffins for whispered wishes of human beings, or beings

costumed as humans, with fingers and feet. The foot,
this someone said, is seat of the soul, the heel the wheel.
I'm sensitive to tropes like these. Everything reminds me

of something else. And I've got this plantar fasciitis—
have had it for months, in my deep left heel. Left,
this someone said, is the side of the feminine, & of love.

It rankled me to hear this and my hand shot up to the sore
on my upper-left lip. I didn't need to look in a mirror
to see it, but when I did, I noticed the raw red crater

was stuck with a strand of tissue or fluff ~ fluttering
like a tiny wayward angel. —Where was the breeze?
This someone mentioned stars as well—in a tone I wanted

to keep but it seeped to the ethers. The stars that stayed
remind me of this image of my inner breasts ~ watery digital
constellations marked with ink-black holes the doctor called cysts.

THE THOUGHT BEGOT

I tended the thought, the thought begot voice.

I listened to the voice divide.

They sometimes spoke transparently but mostly overcast:

the crocus and the lake—

the oh and ache;

stable floor, the open door—

inside-out, the (g)host;

ether in the weather, wet her, eat her, hear the heat.

Heart like a bird in a box, its syrinx, out of which the saying—

If it rains

while the sun is shining the devil is whipping his wife for smiling.

In other words, the vanishing point is echo.