

KATHERINE FALLON

LETTERS FROM THE FARM

I

Catbird at the window. Black capped, unexpected
this far west. I'd never have recognized it but for its crying

mimicry: sounds like, sounds like, isn't. You didn't tell me
they nest near ground. Little potential to plummet and vulnerable,

like an anthill, to the footstep. Longer now since you loved me
than you loved me, the difference stretches narrowly on, deepens.

Emptiness bright as beak shine.
Expectation's tight cup, loose dirt: a home.

II

This week in the city where we met, a woman was strangled
with her bra and left just where, just how she fell. I hear nothing

from you. That girl who lassoed you like a calf kept you like one:
quartered. You stayed close, devoted, hid your pretty throat

from me as though I'd been the blind and careless one. We were
given a chance to love, so I did. You wouldn't know a gift even if.

III

At noon, a little girl was swept into the canal behind me like
so much dirt beneath a rug, her body a secret the baffles will keep.

I heard the sirens but knelt, back turned, willingly unaware.
You can't imagine my grief.

I'd been winnowing the greening down to what might grow
tall and wanted. I had just learned to be happy.

IV

In the field where bone became stone long before I knew you,
a flock of sparrows sits quiet as quartz between plumed grasses.

My footsteps disturb them into a swarm (mine only;
yours withdrawn). Startled by small birds I've startled,

I stand still and let my loss set in: the heart slows,
the hands unfurl to cup the air, in petition.

V

What of the mustard tucked into a bed of cauliflower,
or the magpie's dive-bomb wingspan, fanned across

the rimrock? My boot leaks, sticks fast into the over-
watered field, and I know I was mistaken: none

of my new learning is intended for you. I approach
the land I keep alone and like a storm, hand raised

above the brow to see, far-off, what's coming.