


Marion

Laura Read

—  —

I've been watching her from my front window
for six days now, six days since John died
and her son lowered their flag to half mast,
one day since the funeral when he set
the vase of lilies at its base.

I see her turning the lamps off at night,
after her son has left, and on Monday,
she takes the trash out to the curb, full
from the thick stalks of dead irises,
the cardboard box for the grocery store cake.

When the house is dark, I think of the six nights
you taught me about this, the nights I called
the nurse to see if you were sleeping, hooked up
to those machines, your leg ripped from knee
to hip and stuffed with metal. Sometimes

I can feel it there, tucked in the pockets of bone,
crinkling like paper, like the letters I wrote you
when we were new and I wanted to tell you
everything, that it was raining, that I went out
anyway, ran past Lincoln in his monument

and under the arms of cherry trees, scooping
the wet sky into bunches that I could carry
like the basil wrapped in a paper towel
I bought at the market with some dark leaves
of spinach, soft cheese, bread.

I was going home to make one plate of dinner
and listen to the rain and all night it poured
so I wrote to you again because I knew that someday
you'll be gone and I won't be able to tell you
how the gutters roared with water.

