

Apostrophe to My Sister's New Lungs

Kate Delany

I will not think of you
as you were in the O.R.,
inert in a pan, a bulbous
beige sponge of blood.

I will not think of you
in your previous life
battered to the donor,
the young woman, just

my sister's size who
drew in the diaphanous
texture of her world
through you. Lungs

have lobes like clumsy
moth wings. I'll pretend
you dreamed of flight,
complained to the brain

that you were ready to take
to the air, not just take it in.
Clamshell cut—the surgeon
told us just before the transplant—

bilateral transverse to the sternum.
While I stared at the wall space
previously occupied by the clock
my sister told us take down,

I tried to imagine you as a letter,
slid through a new mail slot
in my sister's chest, the old lungs,
junky with their aspergillus

and pseudomonas, removed so you
could flutter in, settle soft as a butterfly
on a flower, and nestle around your
new neighbor: my sister's heart.