

The Long Vowel

Katrina Hays

An adult adrift in my childhood bed,
I hear my parents through the wall:
tenor mutter met by alto murmur.

I listen to the sling and mumble,
the sound of water
running over stones.

He is river;
his course dictated
by the banks of logic.

She is waterfall;
she is language that tumbles
in lyric and line.

If they are source, then what am I,
bound by blood salts
and limestone bone?

The ceiling peels back;
Polaris beckons.
The bed becomes a barque—

I raise a canvas wing
and sail to open sea
where I slip beneath the surface

and remember the song,
the long and sustained
vowel of water.