

# the kindness you couldn't accept at the time

Your mother's hand  
on your forehead  
was a telephone

ringing in a house  
made of smoke, you were  
too hungry to eat, man,  
the bread turned to typewriter keys  
in your mouth and you spit  
out manifestos nobody asked for--

She kept showing up like Tuesday,  
reliable and wrong,  
bringing soup that tasted like  
the color beige sounds  
when it's screaming, and you  
said no thanks, I'm full  
of the freeway, I ate the skyline  
for breakfast,

but really you were just scared the kindness  
would crack you open  
like a parking meter bleeding light, all those hours  
you'd stuffed down there with the dimes,  
the way you kept walking past the only door  
with your name on it  
in handwriting that looked like forgiveness  
wearing your dead father's shoes.

