

my sister and i
Grace Manning

used to rescue baby birds
walked them far

from the melting sun seared road
in the pouches of our shirts

they lived only hours
tucked in shoeboxes under our beds

shrieking horribly into the night
their beaks

cavernous
we dripped

eye droppers of warm water
couldn't remember

what cold water *felt* like
what it *tasted* like back then

thought of metal
under my tongue

made me miss the things
i couldn't remember

couldn't will into that place
behind my eyes

where they live and hover and wait
suspended

we were kept awake
so long

by the want
of tiniest bodies

that when they went quiet
i was too tired to notice

like that time we were sitting

under half moon

dune shadows
and she pointed

the darkness
unmistakably

the speed of it
the power

made its way down the coast
we ran after it

breathless burning chest
high on the stomach pit fear

of this thing
living so easily

in a troubled world.