

How It Will Happen, When

by Dorianne Laux

There you are, exhausted from a night of crying, curled up on the couch, the floor, at the foot of the bed, anywhere you fall you fall down crying, half amazed at what the body is capable of, not believing you can cry anymore. And there they are, his socks, his shirt, your underwear and your winter gloves, all in a loose pile next to the bathroom door, and you fall down again. Someday, years from now, things will be different, the house clean for once, everything in its place, windows shining, sun coming in easily now, sliding across the high shine of wax on the wood floor. You'll be peeling an orange or watching a bird spring from the edge of the rooftop next door, noticing how, for an instant, its body is stopped on the air, only a moment before gathering the will to fly into the ruff at its wings and then doing it: flying. You'll be reading, and for a moment there will be a word you don't understand, a simple word like now or what or is and you'll ponder over it like a child discovering language. Is you'll say over and over until it begins to make sense, and that's when you'll say it, for the first time, out loud: He's dead. He's not coming back. And it will be the first time you believe it.