

MOLLY BENDALL

But It Found No Echo in Her

I can't decide
if the monument I stand beside
arrests me, if it
pushes me too close
to blood traveling my arteries.
Slow, but language sparks
when I quicken it. The roll call
and the birds argue non-stop.
I'd serve and serve them—
here are my eyes,
my unbuttoned forehead.
Now the stairwell carries no daylight,
and the mayor wanders
the back streets. Do we forbid ourselves
from carrying purses
with tissues and perfume?

When I heard them
through the transom,
I knew and followed
in my apprentice suit. I make shields,
I fold maps into chicken craws,
I stuff a grab bag of delight.
Staying fitted to the foyer,
I'm expected
with meals for them.
Thunder stumbles up the steps—
no more bargaining.
It's when my sweater fills
with air then with water
that morning comes
to the quiet streets of power.