

Gianmarc Manzione

Book Shop Blues

Again this lavender ribbon
between my teeth—
see how I make a bow—

it is Christmas Eve.
My hands are wretched
under this fizzing white light, sleet

turning windowpanes to metronomes,
the days swinging by unnoticed
like pilfered jewels.

You know my fingers throb
like a fat man's heart and
even I wear another woman's face,

but over and over weather
beats the window with the sounds
of my name,

and when the lights in this place are
shut, and I feel the glass door's
breeze on the back of my neck at closing,

my mouth open,
I take the evening's spittle
of ice on my tongue,

and I am a girl,
a grandmother, a bead of rain
stiffening on the frozen bus stop bench.