

Mary Buchinger – Two Poems

Davis Square

Once at my feet a wren
lodged between cobblestones
its thin legs pumped upward
wings tight against its white breast

I eased the bird out
set it down beside the sidewalk

It didn't fly away beak open no sound
it stood beside my shoe

Again I reached for it—
plumed air in my palm—

and hid it in a hedge
away from the strollers from the hawks

I did not know then
that place would ever after summon me to look

I did not know my hand would change
would retain the impression
left by the bird thrashing against my skin

In the hall of night

The phone rings—

my father is dying
seven hundred and fifty miles away

The nurse says he can hear us

*The hearing is the last to go
Do you want to say good-bye?*

the room is filled with family
my father stretched out
breathing mask across nose and mouth
forcing air in out in

I listen for machines for breath

My brother says
*The phone is by his ear
You can talk to him*

I drop words one by one
each is a stone I select
tasting its bitterness
its reluctance to inhabit my voice

My words fall
into a bottomless well

Outside my window
birds begin to sing
something like a concerto
it rises
almost comes together
then breaks apart

Mary Buchinger is the author of three collections of poetry: *e i n f ü h l u n g / i n* *feeling* (2018), *Aerialist* (2015) and *Roomful of Sparrows* (2008). She is President of the New England Poetry Club and Professor of English and Communication Studies at MCPHS University in Boston. Her work has appeared in *AGNI*, *Diagram*, *Gargoyle*, *Ibbetson Street*, *Nimrod*, *PANK*, *Salamander*, *Slice Magazine*, *The Massachusetts Review*, and elsewhere; her website is www.MaryBuchinger.com.