

Polly Brown

Bill's Scraping Stone

Somebody used this stone
with its indent perfect for a thumb,

its edge that scraped fur from hide,
or kernels off a cob, or flesh

from bone. Close up, it still bears
a red, sour smell. For years

Bill kept it by the side of the bed
he died in. Then Jean, giving

his shirts and books to old friends,
handed me this rough, dark blade.

I lift it: that toughness, also hers:
to cut away bitter, keep instead

his mountain voice speaking as God
or a crocodile, Jack in the forest,

Sequoyah among ashes and stars.

Polly Brown, of Every Other Thursday Poets, has written about war and peace through the Joiner Center at UMass Boston, and organized plein air poetry in Hopkinton. Her chapbook, *Each Thing Torn From Any of Us*, is available on amazon.com, and recent poems appear in *Clade Song*, *Turtle Island Quarterly*, and *The Worcester Review*. Bill of poem is Bill Holshouser, Every Other Thursday colleague and wonderful Cambridge poet, gone too soon.