

Black Bird-Shaped Hole

Like the sleep-drunk teenager back home, in bed,
the dawn is pallid and reluctant.

Edges are still blurred,
and down the lane,
the skeleton beeches seem insubstantial.

I could wipe them away, like fog from my glasses,
if I wanted to.

I am waiting for the dog, who is old and slow,
and on the gatepost, I watch a bird-shaped hole
to see if it is moving.

I want to poke my finger in, to see how far it goes.

I want to feel the vantablack, where something unknown
is doing I don't know what.

Headfirst, I push inside, gut thrusting like a caterpillar
until I'm all in.

The blackness fills my crevices –
the slither-moons behind my fingernails,
the commas of my nose. There is no breath.

My side-eyes seal shut, the nubs of my ears curl tight.

In the before and the hereafter I am held.

The dog is back, barking for breakfast.

Our breath-clouds blend in the startled air,
and on the gatepost

a blackbird opens his yellow beak, and sings.