

SAM FLETCHER

Spirit

Remember we are knit from
 stuttering thread, attempts to speak,
 a shaking hand that held out a name and said:
here is everything,
 make what you want with it.
That's why it feels like we're naked.

Tell me
 if there is anything left
unsaid, once you've
heard the ribs hum in my chest, the borders creaking.

I've read that if you fall into space, you've got to exhale
 or else your lungs rupture.

But we don't live in a vacuum.
So we breathe in, like the world
 —the crowd and the pavement;
 the traffic and the sleet—
depends on it (because it does).

Yes, I'm starting to believe that
 all our air is kept alive
by collective consensus:
 you breathe in me and I breathe
in you. (I've said this to poems
 and oak trees and silence too).

Stripped, we find nothing
to be found. A trace of what you once told me,
held in tight by the pressure
 (not firm enough to suffocate)
of another's breath.