

A Golden Shovel After Gwendolyn Brooks

The day you escaped, little bird, when
you fled your jailer, knowing you
would never see me again, you must have
flapped your wings. Central vein hit wind. I
had forgotten you were not my heart's way to say
flutter. Beat. Persist. I had forgotten
so many things: how to poach an egg and all
the useful ways of carving knives that
my mother taught me. I would tell you then
if you wanted to return that you
could leave me a sign: three silver coins. May
is the month of commemoration. I would tell
you to bring me a silk thread. Then
we could begin again. Slow. Binding. I
would tell you that for all that may
come amidst salt and bread and bone to believe
I have never wished you ill. But you
were wise and have never looked back. I have
held the egg to my parted lips—forgotten
what my intentions were. Forgive me.
It is impossible to make a war poem end well.