

SARAH GARDNER

Ache

A stiff wind stirs
the late September light. Ramshackle
night settles into the pews:

the shadow of one tree
weighted on the tree behind it,

shadow of oak
slumped on two maples,
shadow of maples pressed
further back.

Why all this unrest?
Soon it will be midnight and
I will have written nothing

while all across town fettered enemies
sleep in their shared beds.

A girl downstairs
in cotton-footed pajamas grows
louder as she cries.

She has a tooth cutting in.
The pain tastes of graphite,
of the remaining seas.

Somewhere in the sunlit half
of the world, and somewhere
in the dark, two waves blunder
to shore.

Then two more. Two more.
Nothing changes
in the body of the cliffs.

When the girl below me cries,
the roots of my molars
electrify.