In the Abstract

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Slowly, slowly, slowly, 
a red hawk circles the blue sky. 
“It is a meaning,” 
I could say, or “It is matter, 
the form.” But that would be disingenuous. 

How a word 
soars from us, leaving 
the mind open, the mouth empty. 

Or, alternately, how it stabs at 
the small distinctions 
on land, conquering 
deep untidiness 
shallowly. So my guess, 
placid and many-hued, 
doubles the blue 
distance, which is almost all 
slate. 

So it falls. 
If meaning were flight, 
would it be so perfectly honed, 
would it be such an instrument 
of departure, 
such a private chariot 
of feather and air? 
And what would that meaning 
find, the one 
we can’t touch, clear and sure 
of its path? 
How it would swath
through the blue shell
of absence, not even a cry
could reach, not even a cry
on the highest of hills . . .
Oh well. If I
am not careful, the meaning’s
lost. Maybe
it is what appears to be
most vulnerable
to loss: a word
and its history, its freight,
the wing that lifts
our eyes to see beyond sight.