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Trying Not to Lie

Ken Brewer

*A good person will not learn the wiles of art.*

—Czeslaw Milosz, “Reading the Notebook of Anna Kamienska”

Language itself is a lie.
The words become thieves,
spoken or written; even
when we think them,
words steal the truths
of our lives like shoes.

Words walk from our
voices, our pages, our minds.

Yet, I cannot imagine
my life without words.
Even if they stood beside me
and I reached round
their shoulders, squeezed
them to my side
trying not to lie,
I would think
“Ah, my friends,
again you have
fooled me.”