

A Reason to Remain

KAT DUNLAP

after a painting by Mary Jain Poiries

was it the bouquet wrapped
in coral tissue
offered by a trembling hand

or the dropped flowers
broken and scattered
like so many angry words

was it that one remained whole
among the broken stems
and strewn petals

perhaps the tissue reminded you
of breakfast on the balcony
that first morning

the bowl of peaches
their soft flesh so sweet
a fresh breeze from the sound

perhaps it was the Bach Air
that drifted with the sunrise
and softened the moments

look – you said
as a pair of spoonbills
fed below among the reeds

magenta feathers riffling
as together they sifted the shallows
steadily wading on impossible legs