

Bruce Bond

Wind

Long ago, the names we gave it blew
over our tongues, over those who saw
not wind precisely but what it moved,

to flesh a thing that was not a thing,
more a blur, like us, and so beyond us.
And though in time the syllables changed,

the dead tongues were in there somewhere,
they still are, not to mention the mothers
who handed them down, a little rain

in their voices falling over the roof,
over children in their beds who heard
in them skies fall to put their fears to sleep.

Today my wife can barely talk. She looks
instead to the details of a mother's
memorial, to music, prayers, final debts.

All of us this day have our distractions.
With or without them, we look away.
The north blows against the temple bells.

Just where it starts is anyone's guess,
the current and the word that carries it.



No end to the words we bring to words

to open them, the words we bring to silence.

And yet we get just so many before
the day that gives them a number. Hard,

tangible, this number, and clear as wind.

So difficult to break a mother's code
as it in turn breaks down. A last wish

perhaps, a private word, as if language
could still be language and hers alone.
The dead tongues are in there somewhere,

the words a child hears before words.
Long ago the sound of my wife's name
rose and fell into the dark cradle.

Good night, said the world crackling with wind.
Good night, said the word for wind, and breath,
cascading inward, deepened to a roar.

