

SARAH AUDSLEY

AT THE MUSEUM OF EVERYDAY LIFE

The theme this month: scissors. Last month:
knots. From the plinths, in our hands, storks

slide their legs back & forth, make tiny cuts of air
& mimic striding, lifting their laden beaks,

deliberate movements an upward charge
into a darkened sky—wings, full-blown.

*When you're serious about your sewing & crafting,
you should be serious about your cutting, too.*

Stork scissors: birds, molded thin blades
as beaks; their eyes, a screw at the pivot point;

each body the curvature of handles; the legs rounded
holes, one for thumb, one for pointer & middle.

*The result—scissors & shears of uncompromising quality
that will bring you years of cutting pleasure. Dear metal birds,*

tell us the difference in feeling between cutting
fabric or flesh, about the midwives who carried

you in their kits. Blades through the slick of newness,
the skin's first brush with oxygen. Cut of the cord,

a silent snip. Take wholeness & pull it apart
to codify a sum of parts. Tell us so the "I" can fly

forth, so I can individuate from the flock
& with this act of separation, take flight

from any vantage. Which is to say, if I break
my habit of believing in the myths, in babies

borne to mothers from storks, in metaphor at all,
what could be different. What might make sense.

ON CALVING

The door handle, smooth from roughhands
opening & closing, a camera's shutter on the scene:
the round brown heifer calving on her own

in deepnight without help; her warmslick clumps
two-inch sawdust, stains the barnwood floor.
I shamequake in this childdream. An alien form,

afraid of its newness, the smell, I remember
the men beckoned me closer to witness
the calf stand on its own. How seldom *to wonder*

is its own category, its own box to check off, a To-Do
to classify as accomplishment. Instead, we follow
directions, believe in mythmaking, alternative facts,

progress. So. I believe the newborn nosetugged
at the mother's teat, the way my mouth never
pulledon nipple, begged the body. Then, let me

wonder at lightparticles, the Milky Way, lacrimal ducts,
how my eyes spark when you appear, ghostmother,
when I thought you were what I had to let go.

The future is here: veal, so tender-battered & served
on cruises to tourists who clink champagne & chew
as they watch the glaciers quicken with the warming,

the slow moving turbines pumping & invisible
under a tonnage of water.