

GENEVIEVE PAYNE

## POST-MORTEM

All around were the bodies  
of people alive,

their slow and indifferent molecules,  
the certainty of their arrangements.

I slept in my childhood bed  
and awoke to small occasions,

but language was so formal—  
a shut door.

I kept thinking I'd see you  
standing like a turncoat

in the soft smoke  
of another's porch doorway.

On the steps to my room a man  
leaned toward me

in that awful way a picture frame leans  
both toward and away from the wall.

Like a mirror returns,  
I felt a velvet possibility.