

waiting room
MORROW DOWDLE

having departed
from understood
but not quite arrived
at unknown

it's where she sits
touching the edge

since the moment
the scan showed
what might have otherwise
gone unnoticed

how can you trust
a body that has gone
so wrong

what is strength
when it shrouds
what we need to know

if only
she had sensed
the lonesome one

before it propagated
across the landscape
of viscera

she could have sent
a single soldier

now it will take
whole armies –
old colonels
conscripted youth
uncertain mercenaries –

she will have to accept
what she is given

she will have to ask
for things she never wanted

she will have to love
the body
though it betrayed her
betrays her still

she will have to be present
for others
even as her own essence
abandons her

she will learn to be honest
when she wants to lie
& to lie when she wants
to scream

where she sits
it's not so different

from the one silent
in basement or attic
as nazis stalked
above or below

from the one lying
gagged & bound
in the trunk
of a moving car

from the one clinging
to a roof
while waters rise

they have all touched
the edge
of terrible
possibility

all that's left is to wait