

Susan Adams

The Donation

I stare at ten red fingernails spread on arm boards
fine blonde hair too real for the pillow
eyes roam monitors, oxygen level,
heart beat pulse, return to red, back to clock,
move behind the unwind of minutes

She's 16, fell from her horse
will never know the wind again,
draped in sterile sheets
arms are free strapped in a 'v'
little red arrows pointing

Hung in this strung space
each second cuts silence

Time is patient, but, never-the-less.
How long will it take
too long, for thoughts to haunt ideas,
the inevitable has already been crossed
if the earth spun any faster
it could not change this outcome

I'm gloved, untouchable,
even my breath is masked
had I held one manicured hand,
would it have mattered

At last, the needles are dropping
I pick up the scalpel. She's run out of everything
this girl has already left. Vital signs are not her own
machines waiting for switches to be thrown

Her falter took fifty minutes. Now is the speed.
We swoop. Taloned crows on offal. Place organs into ice,
surrendered for survival of strangers

The family have lost a child,
ours is a task more brutal than grief.
There is no debriefing.
What I take home, follows.