

## Leather

the only memory I have of you  
is playing with your hands and  
running my fingers over fissures in tectonic plates  
tracing veins that snaked like rivers  
through the canyons of your wrist  
and vanished in the crook of your elbow

the only thing of yours that's left is your jacket  
(at least this is what Mama tells me)  
hanging on the back of her closet door  
I allow myself to touch it sometimes  
the cracks in the brown leather cuffs  
imagining they are your palms

the only solace I can find now  
is that the word leather half-rhymes  
with father  
and that I can build  
with words  
a thousand images  
of a man with a blurry face  
and hands fine-grained like dirt —

at the sea those hands  
push together a mound of sand  
like a funeral pyre  
the foundation of a castle  
and slide away with the tide

I can't seem to find  
a single match in the house  
to set your creation ablaze  
because when you exchanged leather  
for the wings of a moth  
perched on a jungle floor  
you filled the space between your gums  
with the contents of a matchbox  
and leered with a wooden jack-o-lantern smile  
and ran into a firestorm