

Mahogany

Mornings the tiny town's sky belongs to me
and the dog. The dog, mine, and we belong
to the pavement, the roiled clouds
to the man still sleeping
one block back in what was once my grandmother's bed,
the mahogany one she bought from Carmella
half a century ago, who got it from a good dealer
in the Bronx who happened to be an uncle.
The dog was the man in the bed's; now he is mine
and his and we are his. Hunters slept in that bed
in deer season and I with one of them,
almost, but I was done with married men by then.
The hunter's son married my second cousin last year,
I heard. But out here with the soybean I don't hear much.
The radio gets BBC, NPR; the phone rings with other news:
Andrew's enlarged liver, Diane's murder, Raymond's stroke.
The man in the mahogany bed never met them
or my grandmother. And they never heard his broken night breath
the whistling lungs; they never saw me
put an ear to his sleeping mouth and pray.

