

Lillie-Butt

She took to her work with steely resolve;
whether singing to cows, fishing sticks
out of a lake, or alerting us
our daughter had just walked into
the room, she took to all
as if each defined her very purpose.

Of course, her preferred labor
was chasing tennis balls: no
game this, but serious business
measured and rated by her own
secret calculus.

Oh I am sorry I never gave
you the cattle or sheep you
yearned for so much!

And now her labor is at an end.

And now there must be at least a dozen
tennis balls in various stages
of disrepair strewn about the house
I can't bring myself to pick up.

At the last, as I gently sang
our secret songs into your velvet
ear, I know your stubby
moved furiously
whether it moved or not.

The cows are safely in the barn;
the ewes and lambs bleat softly in the meadow
—not one lost —all accounted for;
the sun has set;
work is done.

Rest.

— Jeffery Greb