Two Poems · Matthew Lippman

CHILDREN’S BOOK

When I speak with you the windows don’t move.  
They are filled with grey.  
The man playing piano across the way coughs into his lover’s hair,  
turns over a rose.

When I miss you it was not long ago.  
It was when something was defined.  
It was yesterday, at the museum, when I saw the marble sculptures  
of Love and Eros and thought rain was falling from the  
ceiling.

When I speak with you I remember driving across the bridge with a  
torch in my mouth.  
When I speak with you the river explodes with fish and large  
elephants who blow pink feathers from their trunks.  
I hear warm steel spill across factory floors.

And all the while, a woman lays her head across a body of water.  
It is not you.  
She whispers: lapis.  
Because she knows everything to be that warm.  
Like when the sun is green and the bees come back to her with  
stories the tulips have told about making colors.