

We cannot take anything out of this world

by [Tania Runyan](#) in the [November 27, 2013](#) issue

One of the few ways I can speak to you  
is sliding nylon hairs over wound aluminum,  
praying low arpeggios under the choir's hymn,  
or reeling in the kitchen as the soup overflows.

Today I lamented by the window as autumn's  
gray mushrooms beaded the foot of the maple tree.

Triple-stopped strings, slightly flattened,  
my only real cry. You seemed to build heaven

for the air-spun singer who can bundle all the cords  
of her body in a breath. But I need the language

of arm and bow, callus and vibrato, clouds  
of rosin rising. Oh, let me keep it, Lord,

even when I rise from the grave,  
this quavering voice, this scuffed hourglass of wood.