

The knot

by [Devon Miller-Duggan](#) in the [June 21, 2017](#) issue

He never rested underneath my heart.

There beside the keening jet  
on the tarmac where  
nothing truly touches down,  
where they all come  
when they come home  
already at forever rest,  
a fist, a knot, a burl  
of what had been and was  
another woman's son  
left where it was contained  
beneath a flag  
and lodged itself, fist-hard,  
unmerciful red beneath my breastbone.  
There it hid  
until I found it,  
called it out again,  
my spirit-son.

When he was a knot of flesh  
beneath his mother's breast  
he properly unfurled.

This time I speak the one hard word I've carried  
since they took him from the belly of the plane,  
aloud, although I cannot make a sound of it  
turn either into prayer or reason:  
Gone.