**Self-Portrait as My First Memory**

Loss can be a turning

place or choice. Sometimes

a neutral memory grows

bright with it. Sometimes

it feels as light

as balloons against the ceiling

of an indoor

space. I recall a ramp

in pastel hues, light

falling through a glass-walled

room like a movie

clip spliced in,

just three or four seconds

I’ve turned into

a gate. There were stuffed

bears for children who were

sick. But where’s

the turn, the place

I can’t turn back from or fall

more deeply in? It’s stuck

in me, my innards

curved around

its curves, an emptiness

that lifts

like helium or

held breath

or air puffed around

a pebble in a bag till

it floats, which also

is the loss.