Shaun T. Griffin

La Heilera

Limbed by our losses
we stumble on to the next
border of safe and certain
choices, all burden of being
stowed neatly in the ice
below. What the mind begins,
the body cannot know.
And in the blue forest
of regret, some portent
of another will emerge—
no story but the self it seems,
bound to the rope of isolation.

If we touch the fine
cloth of reason, if we dive
down low to listen, some
rubble of definition begins—
how little we are without others—
even as we’re told to live
without them, this strain
of solitude and worry.
And rely on lesser things—
a last piece of color
in the Rose of Sharon
before winter craters in.

heilera is slang for icebox—the room where immigrants held
Shaun T. Griffin

When, for One Morning, Touch

Days that I slip from the warm earth
of your hands and drive thirty miles
into the eastern sky of sage and dust,
for those who monthly meet
to pick up the broken skin of us,
nurses, cops, mothers, and farmers—
I come again to you, old friends, pressed
to the rudimentary palms of flesh, of one
person without the dawn, to redress desire:
as if touch were an element from which
the atom of attraction sprung,
not physical, but the organic compound
of freedom, a periodic table of inclusion
when our voices collide with the ancestral voice
that will not go unheeded, and
this motionless morning finally relents.