

Lines for Kenyon

You turned still further inward, imperturbable as a lion-gate, and lived on...
— Jane Kenyon, “Lines for Akhmatova”

Sad for seven months;
then, grief, *like a crow*
(your words), pelted
by headlights, shocked
by pharmaceutical scree, released.

There is nothing I can do, you wrote,
against your coming. I wake
towards evening, the lot empty,
the air, past
the windshield, blue

and still. You’re turned
to look at the camera, gazing
out from the cover, out past
my thumbs, your eyes like birch,
bruised, bright. You wrote:

How I love the small, swiftly
beating heart... The old car starts. I hold
your book in one hand
and steer with the other.

—Benjamin Shalva