Leaving the Hospital

By Anya Silver

As the doors glide shut behind me, the world flares back into being— I exist again, recover myself, sunlight undimmed by dark panes, the heat on my arms the earth’s breath. The wind tongues me to my feet like a doe licking clean her newborn fawn. At my back, days measured by vital signs, my mouth opened and arm extended, the nighttime cries of a man withered child-size by cancer, and the bells of emptied IVs tolling through hallways. Before me, life—mysterious, ordinary— holding off pain with its muscular wings. As I step to the curb, an orange moth dives into the basket of roses that lately stood on my sickroom table, and the petals yield to its persistent nudge, opening manifold and golden.

Poem reprinted from the New Ohio Review, No. 9, Spring, 2011, by permission of Anya Silver. Dr. Silver is associate professor of literature at Mercer University in Atlanta, Georgia.

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid1804.AD1804