

BONNIE JILL EMANUEL

GONE TO THE LARKSPURS

Today the sky is a picture
of flowers blue
bluebells over Brooklyn.

October the sun still
flares. Air unfolding,
cooling. Street trees

inside short-box fences, lonely
gifts lined up, unwrapping,
leaves tinseling, dulling.

I pull my flower-blue
sweater off, on.
Blink & blink.

A black-hatted man hunched
into a curl on a brownstone stoop
has an elm body, neck

like fissured branch with gray
payos vining
down sides of his face, ah

my long-dead grandpop
Abe. Wild white-red hair.
Hoeing & watering bent

over potatoes & peppers in his dark fedora
out back of the store, row house color of barley.
Grandpop left the city only

this once—
when we drove in the grocery truck three days without stopping,
to see what stars look like out west & how wind

might howl over dry-valley wildflowers.
All of Sixth Avenue is a canyon today.
A schoolgirl playing jacks solitaire

on the sidewalk, small red ball
hopping haphazardly off
cracks, clefts, brush.

The clay stone church & secondhand store.
Wig shop next to wine bar.
I go in & out

of grieving so often here—
freshly born, unnameable
exotic smells from a food cart

incense around like mountain smoke,
spicy fruitwood burning its sweet,
ancient sharp.

*Paprika,
lecho*
so hot we used to cry.

