Milk bones, cat food. Someone else’s grandmother’s stewed tomatoes. Chocolate covered this, that.

A pepper so hot I left it on the windowsill of the dark bar where I was dared, drank

a quart of milk to balm the burn. A bird the size of my fist on prom night: surprised by the legs, dressed in paper and bound at the joints like something in need of restraining. My words, yours. Nothing in place of everything I wanted.