I.
The plant I bought and forgot to water scales the chimney now, spooning it—long death-embrace—red leaves bend as if breathing. The tar has made it waxy, has undercut the brine smell, has turned the air into molasses
II.

like when the factory in Boston exploded
and nobody thought molasses could run
into waves like water, only heavy.

Nobody escaped the living
rooms in their corners, stacks of New Yorkers
thumbed through to the Shouts & Murmurs
page, left there
III.

for some future daughter home

from a spring semester

in Germany, which I always thought
would be like Santa Barbara

in winter: low, grey

clouds that half-cover the grey-blue

sky, the grey-brown earth, and pushing

through (like fingers through tissue), new

growth the color of ancient forests

all seen through broad windows

trimmed with aluminum

painted metal-blue.
IV.

I've never been to Europe. I mean
that my first winter in Santa Barbara, the place—
streets shared by cars and pedestrians, cold,
multi-color buildings painted by students—
felt like Germany to me,
felt like looking into the fish-eyes
of a Chagall and finding no answer.