

A Fresh Coat of Paint

He is learning how to imitate,
how to repeat the therapist's cues,

but can only hold the echo
so long.

They don't callus.
They don't bloom.

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We scrape an old bench clean,
expose striations

that are weathered and shorn,
stroke a bright color along the grain,

cover each divot, each scar,
seal it with the clearest coat.

"It will look good from the road,"
my husband promises.

No one will know how the wood
wore fragile as clay
until they settle their weight,

try to rest in its shape.

Sleeping Behind the Gate

I am the cityscape
cradling traffic.

He is the stucco archway
that dips

in a sea of tall doors
and glass windows.

We sleep in a tangle,
his legs wrapped

around my arm, locking
us into place.

And when I stir, dream-heavy,
swimming to the top,

he moves his tiny hand
to my cheek,

holding me in his world
a breath longer,

as long as it would take
if he could say,

"grass, blue, wind."