Inscapes

[YOU—IN A STILL POND]

by Cherise Bacalski

Brief as the shining out before the body
was coming into the world,
my body for miles.

The slow-danced afternoon, all
hiked along
and crooked
making sounds—
small, strange—
red flowers in a still pond,
the turning again and again,
like our earth wanting to shout.

I was often a lightning then, a dozen dirty white pelicans, beaks
raised to the dying tree to the rain swelling across the lake
and then to the storm clear and silent one fish startled a hook
in his gut with his fish head in the water as though the water
were the only one.

I am the only one—
now the flat gray storm,
this rumbled thunder felt, now the small tent I am, you are
the dance I swim,
the this is you are,
and later, your shore lapping
against my pond,
the sleek shining of you, slippery, and brushed with the red rust you once were before you left, were not only a rusted metal hook in a still pond.