SUSANNA BROUGHAM

Sorrow Flowering

The teacher says
everyone has a secret sorrow.

At that B&B in Yorkshire
all was delightful: homegrown lamb, potatoes, carrots, thyme.
But I paused, amazed, when the host said,
“This sorrow is from our own garden.”

Yes, a thrust of sense to it,
that ache could have a local flavor,
a notion that expanded
then deflated—he’d said “sorrel.”

At dusk the doves lilted a worry
softly, somberly, among cut stones
jammed and mossed into a farm.

The calls of owls
flowered through chinks in night silence,
holes in my bewilderment. Their wings
billed the secret and public sorrows

of any and all—mine, yours—
high up and over the dark valleys.