

KATIE HARTSOCK

Needle in a Haystack

It's something people say
as an excuse to stop searching.
They forget that I still go

to the barn, ready to catch
the slightest glint of a silver line.
The day it fell away,

I held its eye up to mine
and finessed a thread to stream straight through,
as sunlight did in the hayloft wall,

the shadowed wood so pinned
with beetle holes, I saw a starry night
from where I sat. It dropped

and made no sound except
a dread of dropping, echoed in
each thing I found, digging down:

a chessboard's cobalt castle,
a fountain pen that wrote like cursive
hay-streaks through my hair,

a vine with red blossoms
the stack's own sediments had sewn.
To clapboards, swallows, mice,

I prayed with Latinate
datives: *bring it me, bring
it me*. The walls engraved

themselves in calyces
and spirals, and I would wake with earwigs
at my neck and knees and elbows.

I watched hydrangea petals
petrify come autumn, rustle
like hungry dogs in the wind