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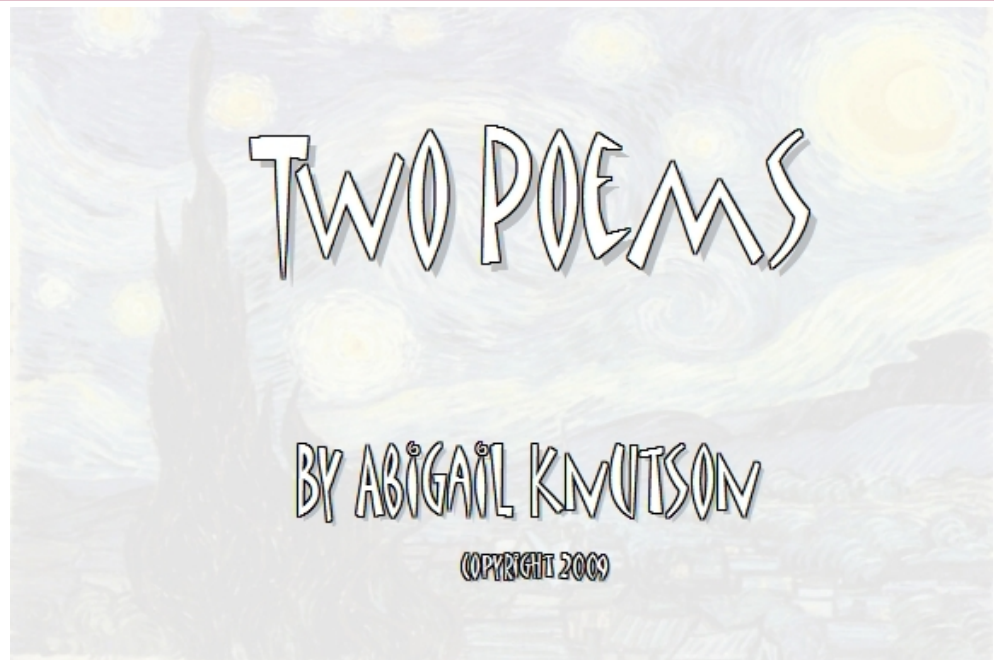
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A Voice in Flight

Scratches kept for years in paper sealed
with soot now play on the radio.
Jagged lines preserved as art: visual
imprint of a voice, reverberations riding time
to be observed by ears as well as eyes.
Besting Edison by twenty years,
and sixteen before Bell sends sound
along without a body, this forgotten
de Martinville launches his daughter's voice
like a medieval bird bearing a message,
flutter of white wings from a hopeful hand.
Her journey, a century and half of smoky flight,
ends when she finds us propelling voices
across oceans, time zones, and the dizzy
spaces between mountains to the ears of those
who easily believe they can receive this myriad
of missives. The ghostly girlish warble,
so recently transcribed from its blackened sheet,
echoes like a portent, trying to touch
me as I search for meaning in this first oral
record of a human voice.

Trying to Tell You Again

Desire to taste the words fights fear they'll fade
as need claws up my throat and finds my lips
through which the golden light tempts words to fly away.
I wonder, can they come out different:
strut like a rooster ruby crowned and sure
or flash of hummingbird that thrums the air?

Still awed by fragile flight, the fledgling leaps
into the air, a thousand times a minute
flushes its heart with tidal, pulsing life
within a chest of hollow bone and down.
This bright-eyed offering baptized in air
still flutters with the thrill of weightlessness.
To make "I love you" throb with sacrifice
each morning I would kill a baby bird.

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Abigail Knutson is an adjunct professor of Composition and Literature who lives in the D.C. area with her husband and one year old son. Her poetry is marked by a narrative pulse that breathes with the convolutions inherent in story, and previous work has appeared in *The Summit Avenue Review*, *Utmost Christian Writers*, *The Rivulet*, *Haruah: Breath of Heaven*, and *Christian Communicator* among others.