

KATE BESSER

All Said and Done

Her mind's in disarray, words fallen leaves.
She's nothing left to say to anyone,
recalls untimely proverbs now and then:
bird song, cascades of restless twitter.

She's nothing left to say to anyone,
her borrowed sayings litter washed ashore:
bird song, cascades of restless twitter.
She opens her mouth and tries to sing along.

Her borrowed sayings litter washed ashore.
Speech is silver, silence gold, her husband said.
She shuts her mouth and tries to hum along,
doll's eyes fixed, she stares down other voices.

Speech is silver, silence gold: her husband's words—
not his: what passed for wisdom long ago.
Doll's eyes fixed, she stares down other voices,
Failed oracle repeating *this too shall pass*.

Not hers. What passed for wisdom long ago,
proverbs repeated, untimely now as then,
failed oracle repeating *this too shall pass*,
her mind in disarray, words fallen leaves.