

Hiraeth (San Pedro River Review February 2020)

Hiraeth by Angela Dribben

My husband installed a hole in my stomach  
like the ones in research cows at agricultural colleges

When I watch movies about love  
of place or read books on Virginia

or tobacco or taste the smell of smoked on the inside  
of my lips, on sunny days and grayed out days

when my lungs are struck with tight artfully-woven webs  
of grief and I cannot find where I left

felicity, he reaches in to pull out my distance pain.  
Chewed up cud of jasmine blooms, mudpuddles with tadpoles

Lightning bugs, bottle rockets, and Mountain Dew  
at Uncle Lewis' on Fourth of Julys, rose flesh

of watermelons, blackened seeds cool against  
my tongue, red clay heavy with loss and arrowheads,

humidity worn like a second skin, muddy  
waters of the Banister after thunderstorms,

the fight in a 5lb smallmouth hooked in a rapid on the New,  
fat black snakes sunning themselves on the wide

trunk of lightning split oak, kudzu blanketing gulleys, afternoons  
napping on needles beneath our pines,

Daddy's rare smile peeking out from between his mustache and beard,  
the sound of his deep voice, a mouthful of tube socks and golf balls,

Momma's unwillingness to operate  
kitchen appliances except the coffeemaker, charm enough to never

have to, Sister's bird-blue eyes filling up wet, both of us  
laughing so hard we pee down our legs  
throwing my ex-husbands sectional into the dumpster piece by piece