My small-town backwater library, behind the bank, across from the post office, floats to the surface of right now, daylight drifting through window shades onto the wooden floor, golden light, let’s call it, because to say sepia places it into a scrapbook, and this story still lives inside the folds of my mind’s aging labyrinth, its infinite pages bound fast in their signatures, spines named and numbered, its nooks where I hid myself, lifting a book to my nostrils, as if I could sniff out a good story, just like my grandfather’s bird-dogs flushed quail from the underbrush. Sometimes I heard whispers rise from a neighboring bookshelf, a telephone ringing, the bookmobile laboring home from the backwoods and always the light bulbs in every lamp humming like bees round a sweet pool of soda spilled onto the pavement.

To that hive of bookshelves, I journey again and again, letting go of my one life to enter the stories of others, still hungry for words and the way they can bring me back home to my senses, the way they reach out to the world.