My father calls today, about an hour after I leave a message at his home. It wasn’t him I’d called for, not really, but we chatted about my vacation and his back and when my mother would be home. and I rememberd the last twig of our conversation an hour before, his awkward, ‘We missed you,’ spider etched like a comma on the floor. We had been decades rugged hiking, rutted landscape choked with granite and soil.

What was it about this day, no different than any other, that allowed us to ease into conversation, walls chastened into the shape of a door? I think it had to do with a poem I had written, months earlier. Although I know he hadn’t read it.

There is something solidifying about language, effable (contrary to what the philosophers say), that builds beams where there was gravel, heaps strength and possibility to the fore.

As we made plans for dinner, there was nothing I wanted except to lean forward, fill the hollow of this throat with calm. I remembered a black-and-white photograph of him in Copenhagen: willow-thin, newly glazed with pilot stripes, Ray Bans, permanent resident status, silence from air raids that no longer woke him from sleep or interrupted fervent daydreams. A life he was born to lose, somehow found.