

Lazarus of Bethany Speaks from the Tomb

*“Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.
When therefore [Jesus] heard that [Lazarus] was sick, he stayed two days
in the place where he was.”— John 11: 3-6*

*For days you have not come,
and the dark is so close about me
it sleeps in my ears and nose,
fills my mouth like sand.*

*I know ripeness, know the blooming
of bruises at every underside
where my skin meets the hardness of stone.*

*I smell of melting copper coins,
of the bottom of a well,
of an open, stubborn wound.*

*Stillness pushes thumbs
into my eyes.*

*And now you’ve come, had my sisters
roll the rock away so you can
fill my tomb with your voice,
the notes of its surety
rising like birds:
LAZARUS! COME OUT!*

*I hear the furl of grief in your throat
pulled tight. The fetid rags
that bind my limbs are tighter,
and so I choose to stay.*

Emily Grise