Confucius’ Failings in the Modern Age

A completely white zebra, like a crosswalk

you could step all over, is impossible

to tell from a horse.

My father pours in his bear-like way the wine.

We share that messiness near strangers:

my manner of tearing oranges open

in Statistics with blunt-tipped claws.

Anyone burned alive can talk himself

out of the dark. But my father, this flawed

umbrella I so love, comes like catastrophe

of old comedy, punctures my birdlike

membrane, cries in front of me, unpedestals.

Two people with twin Zoloft prescriptions who dream

of leaving the house with one shoe.

Can I hate him for this, the way my sister

hates me for using up all of her sweetness?

The year she thought I would die,

the year I danced incessantly

around carbohydrates and trees,

and other things pregnant

with their own flammability?