

## A Birth

In a small southern town  
my nephew is born. An old black man

guards the hospital, won't let me in  
because the sun is down and the moon is up

and there ain't no way lady,  
rules is rules. But

I've just seen my first palm tree  
and I'm high on ocean air

so I plead, tell him I've spent  
twenty-four hours on Amtrak

seen three changes of season  
heard three changes of accent

leading to this Southern drawl. Where  
you from? he asks. Montreal, I say

and his eyes widen, permission  
spreads on his lips as he pulls

keys from his pocket, leading me  
on padded feet to Maternity

he tells stories of blowing his horn  
at Rockheads with Oscar and the Count

and them was the days O man  
and I forget my nephew whose newness

will stretch forward and take the hand  
of the jazz man whose past stretches

back and lead us to the ocean  
where we skip onto the longest wharf

and whistle old tunes over waves that wash  
rough rocks making them young again.

*Lori Weber*