

## *Epistle from the Henares River*

Still I can hear it: in Spain, the sound  
of a man hating me so loud. He invented new sounds

tearing through our apartment, conducting  
his own anger. Storks made throat-sounds

like brass knuckles against bone. I startled through rooms,  
a spooked horse. This was the sound

of me becoming what I wasn't. Scared thing. Liar.  
My mother's voice on the phone: the only sound

I could take. I was afraid to say  
what was happening to me. Her plain-sounds

5,000 miles gone. Me, listening. The headphone cord,  
roped around my neck, sounding

its split-reined hymns in my ears. *Call the police.*  
This is how you call the police in Spain: 112. Sounds

of hooves in her voice. He began to put his hands on me  
and she made a little sound,

trying to listen. Then, no sound.  
This is how you command a horse, sounds

calm, low: *whoa, whoa*. So when I was pinned  
and he ripped the headphones from my ears, the sound

of my mother's voice clattered against the hardwood,  
a child falling down a well. A sound

that haunted my dreams for years: *Jenny, Jenny*—  
an Atlantic away, my mother's futile sounds.