

Fine, she said

by Jennifer Donnell

I ask how he's doing and she says he seems fine,
that he notices the sun again,
appreciates the taste of morning coffee and now feels free,
having left me,
without bandages.
She says my voice is different since the pain, noticeably changed-
whereas he started smiling.

I remember her dream last month, it seemed silly at the time.
She woke up in a sweat thinking
he left me in the middle of the night.
We laughed it off, I felt the baby kick.

The process of him dying is a slow one,
self induced.
I was first on his list,
not last,
and it was easy.

To kill me,
he only needed words,
a cold shoulder, crossed arms, a denied hug,
for me to tire of being his reason to live or die.

His smile, as an aside,
it isn't long before coffee isn't enough of a reason to live.
He wants a harder cocktail for himself.

His arm steady with a gun,
unless (he thinks one night)
that's unnecessarily messy,
painful, expensive,

too many chances for things to go wrong.

A rope is cleaner,
he explains with a straight face.

He's calmed by the visual.

