

New wings

By Alice Miller

Looking out at a man's name on a battered wingtip
in strong winds; was it planned that when
the cheap wing bends, the name stays steady?
What if it didn't matter how much
you trod over the body of your mother, what happened
when you were younger, how you tried forgetting
and forgot to forgive. Something has to hold you: numbers, columns,
cards to swipe, books to shelve,

pints to pour. A life filled with fixed wings, with hard grasps,
with the grateful. What's worth keeping?
Not the sad boy who blamed you for all the ways he was broken.
Not the man's name on the wing, but
why not the battered wing itself. Why not the woman thinking.
Why not the river below, its lips wet, footprints animal.
What forked tongues come when clouds crack open,
when this sky's watched you sleep all day,
and now lets down its darkness. There's all night to stay awake.

Source: *Poetry* (November 2018)