

Revenant

By Meena Alexander

This disease has come back
With frills and furbelows.

You must give your whole life to poetry
Only a few survive if that—

Poems I mean, paper crumpled
Shades of another water—

Far springs are what you long for,
Listening for the slow drip of chemicals

Through a hole in your chest.

If you were torn from me
I could not bear what the earth had to offer.

To be well again, what might that mean?
The flowering plum sprung from late snow,

Ratcheting trill in the blackberry bush
Blood streaks, pluck and throb of mercy.

Source: *Poetry* (March 2019)