

Scale

By Helen Mort

My weight is
four whippets,

two Chinese gymnasts,
half a shot-putter.

It can be measured
in bags of sugar, jam jars,

enough feathers for sixty pillows,
or a flock of dead birds

but some days it's more
than the house, the span

of Blair Athol Road.
I'm the Crooked Spire

warping itself,
doubled up over town.

I measure myself against
the sky in its winter coat,

peat traces in water, air
locked in the radiators at night,

against my own held breath,
or your unfinished sentences,

your hand on my back
like a passenger

touching the dashboard
when a driver brakes,

as if they could slow things down.
I measure myself against

love — heavier, lighter
than both of us.

Source: *Poetry* (December 2015)