

Song of Weights and Measurements

By Martha Silano

For there is a dram.

For there is a farthing.

A bushel for your thoughts.

A hand for your withered heights.

For I have jouled along attempting

to quire and wisp.

For I have sized up a mountain's meters,
come down jiffy by shake to the tune
of leagues and stones.

For once I was your peckish darling.

For once there was the measure
of what an ox could plow
in a single morning.

For once the fother, the reed, the palm.

For one megalithic year I fixed my gaze
on the smiling meniscus, against the gray wall
of graduated cylinder.

For once I measured ten out of ten
on the scale of pain.

For I knew that soon I'd kiss good-bye
the bovate, the hide and hundredweight.

For in each pinch of salt, a whisper of doubt,
for in each medieval moment, emotion,

like an unruly cough syrup bottle,
uncapped. For though I dutifully swallowed

my banana doses, ascended, from welcome
to lanthorn, three barleycorns at a time,

I could not tackle the trudging, trenchant cart.

For now I am forty rods from your chain and bolt.
For now I am my six-sacked self.

Source: *Poetry* (March 2015)