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)