Symptoms of Prophecy

By Camille Rankine

In the new century,
we lose the art of many things.

For example, at the beep, I communicate
using the wrong machine.

I called to say we have two lives
and only one of them is real.

When the phone rings: you could be anybody.
In the evening: you are homeless

and hunting for good light, as safe a place
as any to make a bed for the night.

In both my lives, my nerves go bust.
I’m certain that I’m not

as I appear, that I’m a figment and
you’re not really here.

The struggle
is authenticity.

I have a message.
You must believe me.


Source: Incorrect Merciful Impulses (Copper Canyon Press, 2016)