

To forgive.

After all you were only
nineteen
and here you had

on your hands this
sudden creature
unbranched

just-animated clay
or wild claw
without moral

all so loose or vanished what
could you do but
drop & break her when

in the end it took
a small
army of women

middle-aged scholars
with the anger of saints
& the common sense

of divorcées
to right her
dust off her skirt

and into rigid animal
eyes coax the gaze of a
human being who

learns both how to be
wounded & also how
to forgive.