

**Untitled (4-5-23)**  
By Dudley Stone

The author did not seem to hear  
her own words but bulled forward  
to a conclusion I was busy leaving behind.

She did not hear the click in my head,  
see me suddenly grow roots, drop leaves,  
and dance in the winter winds.

How is it you can spend years jiggling  
a key in a stubborn lock, twisting and straining,  
until a word from a stranger's mouth

greases your grooves smooth and fast  
and a door swings open at last. How is it  
a book that sat mute on your shelf for years

like a dumb creature on a table awaiting storm  
and spark — like you — and now, when you  
have turned gray and need it least, it speaks?