

Gina Vallis

in memorabilia

begin an inventory:

one box, listing, cardboard  
crushed from above, disturbing  
three pressed blooms more  
dust than velvet

rattling at the bottom,  
one dull-colored stone collected in passing

*that knock-me-down sunset under the shadow  
of piedra blanca, the horizon still seared with blood-colored light*

so fragile in our fingers, these magics —  
one coin flattened on the railroad track, one ticket  
never punched,  
one empty pouch still smelling of

*his old muttering leather skin*

smoking tobacco,  
fishing line, scars, smear of recipes, the  
crack that broke your mother's back, and holding  
it in my hand — *oh, yes:*

*you pushed her around the zoo in a wheelchair  
creaking with the just one more thing she had to bring  
leaving gashes in the manicured habitat  
absolutely tearing it up, while the keepers winced and  
the baboons shrieked with jealousy*

for body parts:

six children's teeth, two clips infant hair,  
and, shuddering, one dried umbilical cord rattling  
in a plastic hospital jar, fumbled and dropped,  
rolling away and brought up against  
old woman's shoes

*his heart attack dashing him to the floor  
she's crying out and making them run*