

Looking out the Window of Dunkin' Donuts, Contemplating McLean Hospital's Research

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The landscape puts its jigsaw together cleanly, clearly blue
in blue, bird in bird. The hospital's hills ripple under an asylum
of birches—shadows look more resolute than the sky's nearly-still

sense of time. I am at the bottom of the hill, at the low point
of a wave. An American flag rushes against a flagpole,
then goes quiet, the POW MIA flag under it like a tiny shadow.

I do not understand shadows, where they come from, where
they go. I cast them, though, and I cast them out, my mind
roiling like the first sea. I see shadows where they're not,

doctors say. A man is not entering my room. A woman is not on fire
in her own mind. The walls are not moving
like a migration of monarch butterflies. I go back to the hospital

to tell them how I know this, now. They want to know.
They have me talk about the directions
of traveling dots on a computer screen. It corresponds,

somehow. I see constellations, cities where I have lived,
languages the world is trying to forget, or rediscover.
I simply tell them if the dots move right or left—