

Two Poems

ALISON PRYER

narratives of desire

so certain of your friends' affections,
you come home with small hands full
of valentine's – love letters you call them –
tucking each treasure one by one
into your heart-shaped box
the way I wish I could store
this moment spent with you.

Portrait of a writer

kneeling on the chair,
hunched over the keys,
wayward curls pushed
behind your ears,
it's clear
you mean business.

experimenting with question marks,
tapping out rows of Xs and Os,
eyes scanning intently
for five special letters – just those
that will spell your true name.

you find the one you want
and your finger swoops down
mercilessly –
an eagle on its prey.

what are you writing?
I ask.

a poem,
you say.
not looking up –
way too busy.

I'm thrilled! you've discovered
letters and words can be cast
into poems that then take flight,
becoming magic carpets of the heart.

just maybe
something of me
has rubbed off on you –
an unintended pedagogy?

what's your poem about?
I ask casually,
afraid to break the spell.

you sigh, dramatically.
oh, mother!
I'm trying to concentrate.
you're disturbing me.

I wince. it's painful
to see this part of me.
yes, I've rubbed off on you –
my unintended pedagogy.