Graffiti of Silence (Edmonton, Canada)

There is a poem, waiting,
tucked away behind a trash can,
stickered on a street sign,
stenciled across a broken wall.
Le paysage d’un mot:

Listen.

Not listen to.
Not listen for.
Just listen.

I become silent.

blue-wing silent
loose-wind silent
white-page silent
wrist-ache silent

I had forgotten

la dimension du silence.

The kind that tingles across
your palms, and you can fold
and place in your pocket
to peel apart later.

Shadow-lengthening silence,

heart-at-peace silence,
the kind you can only hear
when a tiny, hidden bird
reminds you to listen.

The Fisherman (Granada, Spain)

for El niño

So much of what we live
is only seen and left unsaid.

The fisherman raises
the line of his horizon.

A slender, silent man, he slouches
over a lonely street in Realejo.
Above him, his thoughts –
shadows cut through them both.

Tenemos miedo a buscar
cosas encontradas.

We are scared of finding
found things.

Buscamientos imposiblescos –
His multisyllabic mysteries
construct a new geography
but there is so much left to say.

Be compelled to look
en cada calle y avenida
Walk through every life
that you can. Live in these
layers, the letters
we write to the future,
read diaries of grief
from our past. Chase that
impossible glimmer of light
on the broken wall.
Monsters in Montevideo

for Alfalfa

When sunlight slices a flat wall
in Barrio Sur, I panic.

I adjust my lens and squint
to find several eyes
staring back at me.
Curling blue fingers
reach out, almost living,
mouth open
in a long vowel.

I had not expected this
strange shape of surprise
that can see, not just be seen.

I don’t think I think anything
for a while.
The monster moves,
    and I move with it.
The sunlight leaves,
    and I stay with it.

There is a story stored in this wall
a secret hidden in the blue swirls
at once outside and inside me.

Graffiti is just another self-portrait –
it must exaggerate to exist,
to show us that the world
is meant to be broken,
then painted over.