

## The Goodbye Window

The air is still fresh.  
My son lolls in the jogger,  
singing the names  
of all the people he knows.

When he turns and asks  
*Mummy, is your daddy dead?*  
and then,  
*Where did he go?*

his tone is easy, conversational—  
no concept of loss:  
friends, grandparents,  
father, mother, sibling.

My voice meets his  
with mirrored lightness,  
appearing  
sincerely undisturbed.

Yet when I leave him at the school,  
his face becomes a gash,  
and his arms sway like tentacles  
from the goodbye window.

On the way home,  
without his ballast,  
the jogger bounces wildly  
over ragged cracks in the road.

— THERESA McCourt