

Ars Poetica #1,002: Rally

I dreamed a pronouncement
about poetry and peace.

“People are violent,”
I said through the megaphone

on the quintessentially
frigid Saturday

to the rabble stretching
all the way up First.

“People do violence
unto each other

and unto the earth
and unto its creature.

Poetry,” I shouted, “Poetry,”
I screamed, “Poetry

changes none of that
by what it says

or how it says, none.
But a poem is a living thing

made by living creatures
(live voice in a small box)

and as life
it is all that can stand

up to violence.”
I put down the megaphone.

The first clap I heard
was my father’s,

then another, then more,
wishing for the same thing

in different vestments.
I never thought, why me?

I had spoken a truth
offered up by ancestral dreams

and my father understood
my declaration

as I understood the mighty man
still caught in the vapor

between this world and that
when he said, "The true intellectual

speaks truth to power."
If I understand my father

as artist, I am free,
said my friend, of the acts

of her difficult father.
So often it comes down

to the father, his showbiz,
while the mother's hand

shapes us, beckons us
to ethics, slaps our faces

when we err, soothes
the sting, smoothes the earth

we trample daily, in light
and in dreams. Rally

all your strength, rally
what mother and father

together have made:
us on this planet,

erecting, destroying.