In the tower
Allie Gips

Hours before the vernal equinox and
Fat wet flakes confetti our patio furniture,
Still free to wander where they want,
When they want. To their dampening quiet,
I wash dishes, fold laundry, practice yoga.

I try to forget that I cannot leave but
Each minute falls just as heavy as the
Mounting drifts outside.
Miles away, my lover is wrapped in
Dwindling paper and plastic, doing

A job that just days ago didn’t feel
So dangerous. That was the old world.
In the new world, each speck he carries
Home is an assault on our imagined
Future. I discard everything but this moment

And set up a decontamination zone in
The garage. Through the television screen,
The slow-breathing yoga instructor says
To take this calm and carry it forward, let it
Permeate whatever real-world tasks remain.

But what if the only task left is to worry?
I worry about the slick snowy roads
I worry about the open-armed hospitals
I worry about the man I love, the man
I plan to marry, the man whose children

I ache to raise. I worry he will leave me
Without wanting to. I breathe through my nose
But it does not make a difference. I wait
Like Rapunzel for his arrival. Once, I, too,
Carried the sword, but now I find myself

Stripped and naked, unable to help him
Defend the kingdom. Tomorrow, the snow
Will rest still and clean; no one to dirty it,
No one to scold it for arriving on the first day
Of spring. Tomorrow, maybe, I will find tasks

Beyond worry. But not today.
Today, I braid my hair into a long rope.
Strand by strand, I try to pull him home.