

Mike James

IN THE COUNTRY OF GRIEF

as though you are ill  
on a journey

hands filled with  
absences

mouth with a thousand  
raw questions

the taste of sand

MERCY

when you say  
mercy  
hold the word in your mouth  
a moment

the weight is the weight  
of a thousand pebbles  
placed  
one at a time  
on your tongue

if you feel dizzy  
let your hands  
fall to  
your sides

the birds  
that gather darkness  
may come  
to rest there

LAUNDRY

this morning  
while you were away

i looked at the  
egg-shaped  
buttons  
on your  
good shirt

thought of  
the warm  
eternal summer  
of your fingers