

DANNYE ROMINE POWELL
Loss Received a Letter Once

on ruled paper, scrawled, from a woman
who knew his parents in their youth,
her words a lit path through thickets of old
confusions. He'd open it and the photo
always fell out—him and his silly-proud grin,
lofting a toy boat, his mother in khaki
shorts and knit shirt. He'd hold
a magnifying glass to study her hand
and how it lingered on his shoulder. He lost
the letter, of course—maybe it landed in the trash
by mistake, maybe he stashed it in a book. He looks
for it still, its choppy, blue lake of regret,
the little boat bobbling to a distant shore.