

HERITAGE

BAILEY MARTIN

Don't worry. Even 3,000 years ago,
we were burying dogs. Before that,
kissing. Before that, wetting hands
with paint. Somebody, forever ago,
plucked berries from a bowl. Saw
the purple stains on the stone, smiled.
Somebody parted dirt with a stick,
or held a heavy thing for somebody else.
The language of gesture is older than fire.
I am suggesting this is business as usual:
I wash our socks in a sink while you shop
for breakfast. Outside, the air goes pinker,
the sea fills with light. Or say it's a night in—
we tuck tiny onto the couch. We get our hair
in each other's mouths. Say I'm thinking
about love in the world. All the love, all over,
because I'm wine-ruddy and just watched
a friend carry his brother home. Once,
I saw a businessman eat dinner by the river,
his suit jacket a picnic blanket, his face
turned toward the falling light. Don't worry,
there's nowhere for all of this to go. How do we
hold onto anything? We notice it.
Then we notice that we noticed it.