

BRACHIOPOD

Dawn Corrigan

*And God brought them unto Adam to see
what he would call them. And whatsoever
Adam called every living creature,
that was the name thereof. —Genesis 2:19*

In freshman geology
I learned a secret vocabulary.
Today my notebook sounds like folly:

Cementation,
desiccation and crystallization
are the three types of lithification.

Crystals have tenacity,
luster, streak, taste, diaphaneity,
color, cleavage and specific gravity.

Mostly, though, brachiopods
were what I studied, odd
bivalved lampshell creatures, fodder

for bearded
scientists, men weird
as Mr. Buckman, who appeared

thus in *The Human Face*
of the Brachiopod: “A sad case...
his not a positive accomplishment for our race.”

What did he do,
little brachiopod, to you?
And where in your coloring are the turquoise blue,

the ruby,
the yellow topaz of gobies?
Surely you weren't all medium- to dark-gray?

No matter;
one way or another
you are both our little brother.

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