

ODE to L

L stands for Lesbian,
which was always the word for me,
back when saying it out loud took a bit of girding,
and withstanding the ensuing ripples of unease
took a certain willfulness on my part.
Of course there were other options,
and I wore Dyke for a while
which suited my frame of mind
but not my hairdo,
and all the others seemed to be a part of something else,
like a lesser category, while Lesbian
was completely its own self,
and once I stepped in,
it was clear there was all the room in the world for me,
and any way, I was already a foot taller
and had a longer stride
and lesbian was me and mine
and we were all trains charging down the line
out in front, yelling as we went
to make way, we're coming through!

And then. And then
we were the ones asking for rest stops,
and every time I looked up
a new letter had been added,
and some new glorious truth about who we all are
was making itself visible, and of course,
there is no end to our variety.

But this poem is a love poem to the L
which was placed at the beginning,
which is astounding, even now,
and may have been a moment of enlightenment,
or reparation,
but I suspect standover tactics.

And every time I hear the whole thing
there it still is, the first letter spoken.
I keep expecting it will have slipped away
or been dropped off,
given the long back story,
but there it stays,
As if it were the start of something.