

Justin Boening
THE VERY VERY IMPORTANT BENEFACTOR

Every evening for the past five days
the elderly woman whistling in the garden
behind my house
gallops to my room to strangle me.

It's fun at first.

She's no one I've known, even now
at the window, I think to call her *Whale*
or worse, a witch with an arrow
through her heart, but I won't.

We bay the most abhorrent jibes
when she breaches my boudoir
Prince! Not prince! I hurl my heaviest
books at her breasts, then her chin, then she bows
before she barrels down on my throat.

Weakling, I whine while I wince
under her tin grip: *Here*, arrives with a fork
thrust toward my gut, before she prods at my tongue,
Charlatan she whimpers,
mouthful of ash and crackers;

Fair enough, bad mother, I bicker.

Forgive me, doesn't mean we end, but we end
soon after. She doesn't look back

as she hobbles through my hallway
like a horse's tail twitching in bad weather. In the garden,

from her hammock, she hollers

I miss you, my bastard.

Why have you made it so difficult to love you?