Words in an old notebook
prove (I was twenty-ish, then)
that mind-mud and dismally
tangled brain material
have causes other than old age
or illness. At the time,
they might have been explained
by the rum or beer in mind-
blowing excess the night before.
I don’t remember.
But surely those episodes
of binge and babble
are far outnumbered
by drier spells of helplessness:
me, frozen
over the neat rectangular form
of a blank page, compelled
to write totus to avoid
writing nothing.
It’s reason enough for terror
or self-pity, the thought
that those very things—the booze-
blasts and blackouts—were then
and are now the efficient
cause of wex and taggle:
furrows of gray matter, tilled
for art and wisdom, laid
waste, and the flood of those young
insults cascading still. But no,
I’ve heard that it’s very common: this empty gaze, the pen loose between a finger and a thumb, its tip hovering over absolutely nothing. And so, as tragic as it all may be, finally, I won’t let it bother me too too much. Why taggle over wex totus? I’ll pour myself a glass of wine and see what comes spilling out.