“Beloved Vale!” I said, “when I shall con  
Those many records of my childish years,  
Remembrance of myself and of my peers  
Will press me down: to think of what is gone  
Will be an awful thought, if life have one.”  
But, when into the Vale I came, no fears  
Distress’d me; I look’d round, I shed no tears;  
Deep thought, or awful vision, I had none.  
By thousand petty fancies I was cross’d,  
To see the Trees, which I had thought so tall,  
Mere dwarfs; the Brooks so narrow, Fields so small.  
A Juggler’s Balls old Time about him toss’d;  
I looked, I stared, I smiled, I laughed; and all  
The weight of sadness was in wonder lost.

—William Wordsworth

A Thought went up my mind today —

That I have had before —

But did not finish — some way back —

I could not fix the Year —

Nor where it went — nor why it came

The second time to me —

Nor definitely, what it was —

Have I the Art to say —

But somewhere — in my Soul — I know —

I’ve met the Thing before —

It just reminded me — ’twas all —

And came my way no more —

—Emily Dickinson

**The Second Coming**

Turning and turning in the widening gyre

The falcon cannot hear the falconer;

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,

The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere

The ceremony of innocence is drowned;

The best lack all conviction, while the worst

Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;

Surely the Second Coming is at hand.

The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out

When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*

Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert

A shape with lion body and the head of a man,

A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,

Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it

Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.

The darkness drops again; but now I know

That twenty centuries of stony sleep

Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,

And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,

Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

—W. B. Yeats

**Second Estrangement**

Please raise your hand,

whomever else of you

has been a child,

lost, in a market

or a mall, without

knowing it at first, following

a stranger, accidentally

thinking he is yours,

your family or parent, even

grabbing for his hands,

even calling the word

you said then for “Father,”

only to see the face

look strangely down, utterly

foreign, utterly not the one

who loves you, you

who are a bird suddenly

stunned by the glass partitions

of rooms.

                                        How far

the world you knew, & tall,

& filled, finally, with strangers.

—Aracelis Girmay

**French Novel**

You were my second lover.  
You had dark eyes and hair,  
like a painting of a man.  
We lay on our stomachs reading books in your bed.  
I e-mailed my professor. I will be absent  
from French Novel due to sickness. You put on  
some piano music. Even though  
it was winter, we had to keep  
the window open day and night, the room was so hot, the air so dry  
it made our noses bleed.  
With boots we trekked through slush for a bottle of red wine  
we weren’t allowed to buy, our shirts unbuttoned  
under our winter coats.  
The French language distinguishes  
between the second  
of two and the second  
of many. Of course  
we’d have other lovers. Snow fell in our hair.  
You were my second lover.  
Another way of saying this:  
you were the other,  
not another.

—Richie Hofmann