

## HER BODY ANSWERS NO

As her body curls in on itself, becoming a frame of bone and air,  
all of her words escape except *no*, because there are boxes and boxes  
of *no* left at the end of her life until *no* is all she can say, turning  
her head away as she is lifted onto the commode, *no*; pointing to the stereo  
so someone will put on Celine Dion she sings it: *nonononono*  
and when her husband calls on the phone, the receiver  
placed up to her ear, she shakes her head and growls *no* before she  
hands the phone back. *No!* she cries, smiling at the box of See's chocolates.  
She gathers her two grandchildren into her body and holds on to them,  
breathing them in, kissing the tops of their heads and crooning  
*no*, and on the last five nights she pounds the word through the house  
like rain, like granite. Her body a kite, she holds on to the very end of string  
with her fingertips, whispers finally *no* and opens her hand.

**Pam Crow**