

# hospital healing

*Linda Sillitoe*

of course a two-inch badger  
carved from liver-colored stone  
with arrows bound to his back,  
could not make the difference.

the day i brought him, you couldn't  
talk. the next, weaker, yellow,  
you gasped your question. death held  
your other hand while i bluffed.

the badger, i said, travels the dark  
world below, then surfaces again;  
(later i learned he oversees healing.)  
you watched him, you tell me now,

like a reddish star in a poisoned sky.  
home now, in a bright pink sweater,  
you claim at last, dazzling me,  
not the badger, but your own life.