

Grandfathers of Bogatynia

Caroline Szpak

Everything sounds
the same from inside a plane.
Even the warm air

opens booklets, reads water
colours carbon monoxide detects.
Poor circulation meets morning

like an equal on the flood, or breath
never reaching the floor. What about
the mutual exclusion of cavities?

What about two empty chairs
facing one another? A bandage
can't outgrow the still life a subtraction

smaller than smoke from thermal
stations, but not
a water for bridges —

something he sinks
into — fewer handprints,
the difference in volts. Light sleepers

always as long as approach, initials
instead. Just write
me one gentle poem, he said.

Can you do that?