

## LATE

I couldn't get the boot laced. The hole  
was broken, the lace too short.

And we were out of paper, so we couldn't  
revise the text, though our lives had changed.

Also a torn skirt, a broken watch. More  
things than I could carry in my suitcase.

Then someone's child, her new skin  
a clean page. Someone's replacement,

I thought, but just for a moment--  
I had to finish the boot, and I couldn't

take it with me: it belonged in a place  
I had to get out of soon. It was late.

Martha Collins