

MELD

1 (*verb. transitive.*)

As if we were marked by numbers and faces.

Numbers announce themselves as value
and faces do too. Red and black both
split by 1 variant: in the case of red:
love or wealth. Black: labor or luck. I horde

sort of, in draws and drops defined
by rules intent on planing the field.
There are odds, there is chance. I try
not to play favorites, but there's a ring to
jack-of-hearts, and these ones look like
puppies' feet. Mostly, there is chance

(but I lay the toil face up in declaration).
Or luck. We call it that here. *See BLEND.*
Good or bad, tall or short the stacks
before us. Good or bad and in the laughter

smoke and laughter, an evening moves
as any other. There are a lot of words
that mean, approximately the same.
And there are words that

2 (*noun.*)

are more, but the same, really. The thing, not the
event. Look at them shine in polished finishes

backed by the same geometry all—
 an equation, a sum of parts making sense.

My cheeks are flushed with winning until the
 next first card is dealt. There is never a surprise

so in the first turn

3 (*verb. intransitive.*)

we embellish the stories again. The very, very
 big fish: hands astir like a chorus, that
 incident at the rest stop you'll never forget.
 As if the faces, the numbers, are suddenly older
 we crane our necks to look.
 Everywhere, everywhere we are we've
 been here before. These stories. Steely but malleable.
 Apply heat and strike. Etymology: *blend of melt and weld.*

4 (*noun.*)

Again, the thing (not event). Close enough to smother
 books and photos, stacked through this house like hazards
 gather us indifferently. The particle haze dawn splayed
 with light was part of me. A neighbor's dog is barking as
 another afternoon is stamped. Always, the din. And try as might
 it wins. I lose the page but hang my coat where it it should
 be hanged (on occasion). You place my keys in the cupboard's
 front to postpone the next catastrophe. Love is so tiring:
 its mix of temperance and need, this needing each other
 and not (*go well together; harmonize, mixture*) becoming one.