

Lana K.W. Austin

2018 Words and Music Competition, Winner

Interviewing Li Lu

Why this hunger strike in front of the Chinese Embassy?

Li Lu's hands,
those engraved fingers,
speak in moving,
fluent metacarpals.

Do you think your efforts will elicit their release?

His spine bends into
a tender curve,
vertebrae bowing,
a hushed appeal.

Do you think real change has occurred since Tiananmen Square?

His legs fold
beneath him and into
themselves in
angular language.

A final question: do you believe winning this fight will ever be possible?

Li Lu turns for a moment,
shoulder blades protruding,
his body
in full translation.

Author of the novel *Like Light, Like Music* (West Virginia University Press 2020), Lana K. W. Austin's poems and short stories have been featured in numerous literary journals. Winner of the 2019 Alabama State Poetry Society Book of the Year Award, a 2019 Hackney Poetry Award, and the 2018 Words & Music Poetry Award, Austin has been a finalist and semi-finalist in many other fiction and poetry competitions. She currently teaches writing at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.