

## What I Know About Sheep Is

Basil Wilcox

if they fall on their back, they're stuck.

There's no scurrying themselves up, righting the wrong, rolling it out.

Eventually their digestive systems will fail.

Left this way, they die.

What I know about my OCD is

it's getting harder to remember the little things.

I remember to wash my hands each time I pet the cat,  
touch a blue sock, scrape the white part of my fingernail  
against the pickle jar my housemate might have touched.

Left this way, I miss my dentist appointment.

Find new blood spots that scrawl my knuckles,

Say things like the cure for now is holding my breath.

Later the cure is remembering to breathe.

Later it's washing my hands again.

What I know about the sheep of North Ronaldsay Island is

that their internal clocks are set not to light and dark, but to the tides.

Even on a night without moonlight, they clamber across rocks, scrape  
themselves to the ocean. Their little hooves sink into moss,

a rope of seaweed falls from pink lips, they bump softly into one another,  
with the ocean making all its sweet angry sounds just beyond.

What I know about the sweet angry sounds of the ocean is

that when you are on your back floating atop it,  
it likes to shut its perfect mouth.

All you're left with, the swirling of blue in your veins.