American Life in Poetry
Alison C. Rollins manages, in this striking poem, to contain the anxiety of those facing sightlessness, and the urgency they feel to try to preserve in memory, that which is fleeting. For her, the poem is a solace, for when spoken, it prolongs sight even for blind poets like Jorge Luis Borges. If we think of sight as more than just physical, we may get a glimpse of what Rollins may be saying in “The Library of Babel,” about one of the peculiar purposes of art.

The Library of Babel

*for Jorge Luis Borges*

By Alison C. Rollins

While there is still some light
on the page, I am writing now
a history of snow, of everything
that has been and will be thought.
When a blind poet says *I need you
to be my eyes*, they are asking to see
through your mouth.