

## Ritual Warfare

I left my window open all night, and now rain  
gushes into my bedroom through two milk-white  
teeth. I look outside and witness another year  
growing around a tree, the ring engraved on its bones,  
strangely aglow A long time ago, I was told of shamans  
carving oracles in the shoulder blades of oxen,  
the diligence in which they heated bones  
and deciphered their etchings, squinting under pale  
light. You say you hate the mole living  
on your upper lip. The next evening, I witness you  
carve it out with a razorblade. It's strange  
how we slice open magnolias, force them  
into bloom, how we can no longer wait  
for real gods to come and  
knife us up. Already I've forgotten  
my past incarnations. We fall asleep with the lights  
on. You put your head in my palms  
the way a tree (thunder-charred),  
refuses to reveal how it became dead  
and still empties itself for my touch.