

PRIMER

Maybe I'm still running from the piano we abandoned.
Whispers from the briar, crawling in gray eyes.
How sundown became revival—

*The backyard fence melts black onto
the back of my neck, waxes over
heat waves, the
beehive,
Coca-Cola door to door.*

I'm just claws without hands.
Strawberry jam stuck to my cheeks.

And He licks.

Summer on the porch, we eat more than kiss.
Stories of us and the neighbors, their bones in the sink.
Scrubbing ourselves white—white like I could forget
the piano,
crashing through the window, nettle hanging from the roof—
From you, I learned to pray with open eyes, to plant seeds of hemlock
down my own throat.

But in the hallway, in my mother's wedding dress, and a mouth full of moths:
Mine is a body used to kneeling. My spine,
just an arch.

Father please,

I need you to paint me into the walls
where no god can touch me like that
again.