

Heat Wave

I've spent less than thirty minutes outdoors today
and my face is melting off. I've never tried

acid, but my dad told me someone slipped him some
once before basketball practice and his teammates

melted into the gym floor—that is what my face looks like,
but I haven't tried most drugs, haven't even had wine

or gluten or refined sugar or dairy in weeks,
and all I want is an ice cream cone to join me

in my melting progress, to drip its sweet goop
down my chin, down my hand, stain my shirt

and color me satisfied. The dogs are unimpressed
by the outdoors today. One goes in the back yard,

barks, then whimpers, then runs back inside—
I would bark and whimper at the waterlogged air too

if it were acceptable. Most of what I want to do is not
acceptable, I am told. I want to take molly and kiss

my prettiest friend in this thick heat. I want to
mix our sweat and spit. Or I want to run naked

through a sprinkler, to shimmy through the water
and let my wet skin shimmer for the neighbors.

But I am a good wife. I cook roasted chicken
and vegetables, breathe in the sensual magic of rosemary

and crisping skin, watch a show about women
who loved each other in a time when it was harder

for women to love each other. Spray a little champagne on me
and I will melt into a pile of who I once was—

fire and spice, a menace to neighbors and lovers alike.
I am not that loudness anymore. The algorithm thinks

I need low sugar wine and wireless bras. And it's mostly right—
a sheet mask and a long bath are the only escape

I expect this week. I've grown cozy in this marriage,
domesticated as my pup who sits in her cage and waits

for food to be delivered. I am waiting for something
to be delivered to me: maybe a baby

or maybe divorce papers or for a hummingbird
tattoo to fly off my arm and teach me to believe in the miraculous

again. I used to believe I could talk to God. Now I believe
I talk to myself too much. I am always too much myself.