**Permafrost**

Haley Marks

through the glass, a kind of reverence.

as tightly wound as the whorl of an ear,

lovers entangled in the most intimate

of rituals, setting the table, pouring the wine.

two centers of a candle, heartstrings fine

tuned to the rogue romp of laughter. the room

surges with a blood warm current; the whites

of my eyes devour the scene.

in the next window, a tree ablaze

with painted fireflies like one of Orion’s

prized jewels. the four corners have never

known the convulse of wanting or waiting

which lifts from my throat, only the

powdered-sugar flurry of a snow globe,

only this beacon eclipsed between curtains,

calling my moth-heart.

for weeks, i’ve dreamt of broken teeth,

the air crackles in my lungs, leaving behind

tiny paper cuts. like the hand of some ancient god,

the birch bark sky reaches out to stop my head from

falling in the snow. i have been striking matches

for some time, watching myself spoil like

abandoned fruit, bottoming out on the counter.

but oh! in the brume of other lives i stir.