**The Static and the Wink**

Heddy Edwards

I think about them often, in the morning, when I brush my teeth

—the dozens of people I have been, winking at me,

with a silence louder than yellow-taxied traffic.

Once, I was sixteen and spinning, single-footed with shimmering eyes,

on a pair of pink-satin pointe shoes. Somewhere in the ether, where

physics and adulthood never realized, I suppose I’m still mid-revolution.

If youth is a hope so devoid of color that it sings through the walls,

and age is the opaqueness of knowing, what is this lonely empire?

Its landslide of slate and shale surge each time I peel back a new layer

of the silicone mask I happily adopted, based on every word I’d ever heard.

Somewhere on the astral plane, in a darkened aisle of my hometown’s

abandoned Sears, the teenage dancer walks past the third grader

beaming about her blue-ribbon science project, and, too, past the college

homecoming queen too sad to pry herself from bed. They never knew

the static on the radio was some other version of themselves, floating

amid an inaccessible realm, grazing their fingertips along the same sale rack.

They all sit, tucked between my ribs, flashing memories like feature films

behind my retinas. How long will I stare, suspended here in their

collateral cosmos, before I have the courage to wink back?