

Cora Schipa

Fivefold Kiss

The house waits like a hungry cat. Inside, it's girl-full: tangled strings of firefly lights, paint-night art on spackled walls, windowsills harboring a collection of porcelain clown dolls, a plush hamster, plastic horse figurines, a Styrofoam party hat from the Museum of Sex, record player swinging a woman's voice all around. You and I tumble home stinking of drunk cigarettes, smiling gums-out, whirling clumsy as two kites in a storm, sour fingers over, inside each other's mouths—*shhh!* You are my secret. We leave our bodies like muddy shoes at the welcome mat. We're tired of concrete, tired of road signs, those bug-thronged streetlights hurling our shadows across the asphalt again and again, high-rise windows shining in the night like audience eyes. You and I, we're expert chameleons. We go red-yellow-green. Cicada scream. A girl knows how to shed a body. Deadbolt locked behind us and winking its big gold eye, we drop to our knees, tear apart our tights in long snakeskin shreds, bras slung over the couch like dead winged things, we are of the earth, from the muck of it, crawling across the green shag carpet, we're creatures with claws and canines, we gnash and slither and collide, hair stuck to our foreheads, we break glass and laugh when it cuts us, tasting the beautiful metallic proof of living, that holy water, blessing ourselves all over, a kiss for every point of every burning star. You don't know about God, but you collect rosaries; we clutch them in handfuls, finger their spheres, feel the sharp, cool crosses fresh on our tongues. We try to blaspheme but laugh instead. I don't know about the world, but I have you. I touch you and marvel at your give, rolling because the world of the room is round, ceilings bending around us, you are cornerless, you are everything, we are all warm air, rug burns blooming only later, when the altar of your body sheaths itself and steps out, into the blinding light of morning.