

## AUTUMN RITES

---

*Tania Pryputniewicz*

1.  
Moths flutter out of my closet,  
where the dark mildews bloom,  
widening their green gaseous mouths  
across the plaster ceiling. Fungal sky,  
like shame, prosperous  
in the dark, under the stairs—  
the undersides of each shoe thickening greenly.  
My dress sleeves are sheened—an odor  
that comes off my hands.

2.  
Beige lace—  
dried rhododendrons creeping  
across the creme bust  
of my mother's wedding dress—  
skin, covering.  
Other embellishments—  
purple lipstick or eyelids  
shaded blue.  
Would a title do—  
like married.

3.

My sister's shirt hangs here—  
(I've forgotten the trade)  
her gardenia neck, a trace,  
breathes up from the neckline  
as it settles over my face—  
you know how this falling  
in love goes—a rippling inward

4.

and out at the same time;  
wind unbraiding through rain  
along the seamlength  
of the clouds—  
thunder engorging, with sound,  
the runners and roots laid  
by the lightning preceding it. A dancer

5.

said I will dance.  
Close your eyes.