

IN SITU

Jeannette Miller

The oak outside the window holds its leaves,

tintypes
without faces, the ghosts

of other seasons. Lines around your eyes

mark a past
I trace with my fingers

reading in silence like the blind. A gypsy

once read my palms,
first the left

for possibilities, the right for completion.

You match your left palm
to my left

and I imagine my hand a mirror. Bittersweet,

its orange craters
repeated

in the mirror, two views of the same array,

one so close
it can be touched,

the other an image of what's within our vision,

beautiful,
not easily grasped. The light

beyond the tree takes its shape and forms a pattern

like lace
on my neighbor's house.

What if I follow the pattern and painted the shadows?

I could order it,
own it. The light

would fill the places I'd made for it until it stole

into the afternoon,
its movements unseen

as an hour hand's, leaving time, a marked absence

behind,
to appear the next day

gold spilled over its boundaries, its shape altered,

elusive
as the crescent of light

reflected from your coffecup. It flew from the wall

to the ceiling
and settled

on the table, shimmers now, changing shape in my hand.