

JULIE HENSON

Phenomenon

It all comes back to the enchiladas and you cutting the onions too big
and how we couldn't eat or kiss.

It's easy for you to slip away
into something new, I know. Okay. Okay, the move
to Cincinnati, or Cleveland. The move to South Bend.

I look for signs in the blood under my skin—*how blue*
is your bluest vein?—

in the way the moon hangs,
in the coffee grinds grinding, or my cat's pendulum eyes
counting the number of stinkbugs
swarming the house.

The signs all say: I cannot choose my phenomenon.

I am sometimes sorry that last year

when I got to Whidbey Island

I looked for shapes of omen animals in the driftwood.

I wanted magpies, locust, shadows of geese cut to the quick.

I kept all the windows open. December was dewy and cold
and there was casserole after casserole,

always something to eat when what I wanted

was a glut

of revelation.

I don't know how to explain the way

I stay stagnant without you.

It's miraculous. Like bones, like absence,
like I grew it myself.