

EXCHANGE

We feel these scalpels, know their motives—
each frond raying like fingers on skin,

like the grosgrain sigh of temporary workers
smoking behind every Fashion Plaza.

Like zombies, they want us.
Unlike zombies, they want us
to arrange for the transplant,

to adopt the hardhat matter at hand—star's fire,
cotton cloth combed for weaving new money—

a calligraphy of pulses
to calm and consume the congressional district.

93

Once, I lost the sentence's thread. Once, I lapsed
into uselessness. I counted the smallest change,

registered every quiver in the mainframe
with far too fine a meter.

Now I count myself into existence
breath by electoral breath. I come to
between shifts, hit *refresh, refresh, refresh*

in line at the bank, plastic Christmas tree
listing west, nothing bad has happened yet,

and begin my ascent by guesswork. I gain a foothold

on nine petite security cameras and five green wreaths
swathed with wide red ribbons.

With apologies to the excellent teller, I go out—
reach my real hand through a fat pelt of rain

as if I could mint my own currency.