

NANCE VAN WINCKEL

A Moth for Mary Ruefle

She must shave the nape of her neck
so he can alight there. A clean, clear
new place. He touches down—light
as a kiss. He makes her close
her eyes. Her hands are foresworn
not to slap him. One adores oneself
as host to the unknown.

He holds her under his tongue
where she is a long time dissolving.
Amherst sloughs green seasons
for white ones, and the government
is three tyrants forward before she wakes,
gnaws loose the pupal sheath,
and flies again into the street.