

January · Matthew Lippman

for Karen

She calls me by my first name. I am
up the hill. In the moonlight
all the land is black and white.
No majesty like the one before me burning,
every step into the forest. Away
from the house. *Matthew*. I can hear
it like the bells. She opens honey
for her hands. In my nose I can feel her.
Matthew. The brook repeats and repeats.
My body is timber against the cold. Earth is
quiet between my ribs. Her mother is buried
here. Next to a harpsichord built from fingernails.
Play each melody twice, once in its own heartbeat, once
for the dying things come out of it. *Matthew*.
I am up the hill screaming at the brook.
I know you. The snow is blue.
A bell fills up a child's stomach.
This is one dream when she opens the honey jar:
her mother's breasts knocking against the door.
Like this. Like this. Tidal waves in the jungle.
Near the red logger's tractor, *Matthew*.
From the harpsichord, a breath old with snow.
All these lives too. Where the branches snap.
I am in the hill. She is calling:
Come inside before your tongue blows apart.
All these lives. I hear them.
In the trees. When my ears dissolve.
Her mother twirling twigs on a knee.
Each angel born quiet.