

LINDSEY WATERMAN

SWIVEL CHAIR

tell me about the war, she says.
the swivel chair sways as she taps her foot.
pictures of dogs and boats above her desk.
a vase her husband bought her full of pens.
her fingernails coated in brick red polish.
an invisible clock ticks.

were you exposed to combat?
her forehead pinches with concern.
outside the window the trees release a storm
of golden and yellow flecks into the wind.
no dust or clouds, just blue,
so clear it stings my eyes.
so beautiful.

were you ever sexually harassed in the army?
i looked down at my lap, for a moment
startled by jeans on my legs.
i see the swell of breasts through my shirt.
the swivel chair sways as she taps her foot.
i cross my arms. she writes on her paper.

did you witness any death during combat?
leaning forward on her elbows.
the chair i sit on is suede. smooth.
so soft.
beads of condensation roll down her
glass of water. ice cubes. the clock ticks in time with
the swivel chair as she taps her foot.
her diplomas in frames perched on a doiled table.

the silence sloshes through my ears like soft water.
the absence of vigilance between a tiny tick—tick—tick.

the *husssshhhh* of leaves swarming in a pretty flurry
beyond a thin sheath of clean glass.
perhaps she asks another question.
her papers rustle. her legs cross, uncross again.

what are you going to do now?
silver sparkling at her hairline.
her face is remarkably smooth,
no frown lines, no sunspots.
pictures of dogs and boats above her desk.
her forehead pinches with concern.
a clock ticks. her fingernails are red.
i cross my arms. she crosses her legs.
beads of water roll down her glass.
the swivel chair sways as she taps her foot.