

THE COPPER INTERIOR OF ONE CAVE IS MUCH LIKE ANOTHER AND ALSO WHOLLY  
DISTINCT

*What, hiss the fauns, does the interior taste like?*

The Six Bitch stands up, reaches toe and hoof  
into sleepy moss, reaches tips and tentacles into  
the canopy, holds two red beetles carefully between

*her front teeth, so slick*

and with her tongue low-electric ties the beetles in a bow.  
*Copper*, she says, spitting the bow into her palm.

*copper like blood or copper like medicine*

*Both*, she says, *and the sea*. She remembers salt,  
swaying grasses, tide tug. Cupping the muzzle  
of the nearest faun, she adjusts the bow behind  
one velvet tender ear, one ear whose tufted fur  
shows the smallest wind a door. *It can taste*  
*like a place from what they call the past, an era*  
*preserved in the act as much as the script. Silk.*  
*Smoke. Creosote. Limestone. Time's own musk.*

THE UNICORNS ENCOURAGE A HUMAN CHILD TO ADD A HEAD TO TIME'S ARROW

A human learns to move through time by slitterbanding  
through the birth canal. A hummy returns to their first-breath  
coordinates, reaches a dry arm down through wet years,  
through the gel that cushions those years, gel beading  
the hairs of that arm, hairs going blade, muscles going lax  
and longer, giving up the joints, ligaments sighing loose until  
it reaches into the rat king's nest. A hummy's hand arrives face first,  
ribcage second, reaches so deep into skin knot and lung field  
that the hand itself grows a tail where once was arm. The fur,  
the gel, the possibility of returning to a place that blows the mind.

Stand, hum, between arch mirrors—

*a century high apiece, and copper  
and dripping*

—facing face after face of that day from which you came.

*a sharp hat like a rat's face perched on the hum's head  
round of face, rectangular, potato and cloud  
a wet candle swimming in a glass with the cake knife  
a frosted knife for cutting sweet things deep*