

Night Vision

It was the time we spent together in August that gave me the idea to become an expert at night vision. Because he was a musician, I had been fixated on sound. But chords escaped me. I strained in vain to tell major from minor, charcoal from sun. Still in the humid dark his face angled toward mine. Those first few nights my body became everything. If I had carried shame like a newborn in my hands, I dropped it. Groaned incessantly like his kittens, who ate everything in sight. When they got sick, I watched him hold their lips to his nose, sniffing the black abscesses like fruit. When he came close, I cut off my nose. Death scares me more than anything. If I had kissed my uncle on his deathbed, and my grandfather before him, I did it out of pressure. Everyone else was kissing them. Mouthing verses to scrape the sun of soot. Like everyone I know, they had asked to be buried in daylight—as if the light goes with us. Even among the living, sometimes it seems a night will never end. On our last one he said two things in his sleep. *What sounds terrible you make. Where is your nose.* Maybe three. *The night is a butcher you cannot sing.* In the black unmoving water of the night, I opened my eyes. I listened to the nightjar, groaning between our bodies. I kissed the rim of the future and buried everything I saw in it.