Condition

If they’d told me to recapture
the rhododendron glaze narrowly,

or to chaperone the night’s
answer, I would have,

I could have, easily. But how to lure myself away

from my own body—that I didn’t know.

Afternoon stroked
me (the hedonist), then there was a blur

like persuasive wisteria. Where

was the accident to get me out? Body after
body—oversexed for nothing but a scrim,

a stir. I stretched into the instructions, the foreign
words (they licked my skin), stretched past

their thresholds,
stretched further into their vestibules. Lucky grammar.

Honestly, I lived in a ghost country,

captured in candied lunacy.
Powdered haloes.
Costumes like a cluster of bells.
    Hear them?

Hear them winging it, making up

    a step for absence amiss?
    We were a figure for someone’s

apology or scandal, uncollected gifts, frays

to pray by, necks forming

    an erotic choir. Two of us
shared a smoke, looked for a moment

to take a roadtrip, a deep-set scenario. (She talked
against the blue mock-shade

    of the dressing room with its fabrics
and stretch of mesh). One

of many *shes* trying to find the right music.

    for her vintage jacket and brooch.

    Another stood in front of me, her hair
like waxy fruit. We were nudes in a row
speckled with seed pearls. What flourishing
we thought we’d mastered, but I wanted anything
to replace the gray elastic, the branches fluid
and poised at the window,
anything to lie in wait for me.