

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,

 caught up 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.