

AUTUMN RITES

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1.
Moths flutter out of my closet,
where the dark mildews bloom,
widening their green gaseous mouths
across the plaster ceiling. Fungal sky,
like shame, prosperous
in the dark, under the stairs—
the undersides of each shoe thickening greenly.
My dress sleeves are sheened—an odor
that comes off my hands.

2.
Beige lace—
dried rhododendrons creeping
across the creme bust
of my mother's wedding dress—
skin, covering.
Other embellishments—
purple lipstick or eyelids
shaded blue.
Would a title do—
like married.

3.

My sister's shirt hangs here—
(I've forgotten the trade)
her gardenia neck, a trace,
breathes up from the neckline
as it settles over my face—
you know how this falling
in love goes—a rippling inward

4.

and out at the same time;
wind unbraiding through rain
along the seamlength
of the clouds—
thunder engorging, with sound,
the runners and roots laid
by the lightning preceding it. A dancer

5.

said I will dance.
Close your eyes.