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Palinode

Maura Stanton

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Palinode · *Maura Stanton*

I've saved the milk crystal stone
banged at my door last winter, & the glow—
in-the-dark monster ring from cereal I wear
in bed, so there's always light under the sheet.
On television I see kits that turn
fresh flowers into glass forever, remembering
horseshoe wreaths over a friend's casket
I might have stored behind the armchair.
In a matchbox I've got my cat's grey claws;
when I sprinkle them on linoleum,
she'll bat them idly with her soft, useless paws,
making them click against the stove.
Lately I save everything, even hesitating
over the gnat swimming my beer
or the exploded firecracker from New Year's.
I've tape-recorded my mother's low voice
on the phone, as she describes dahlias,
or the configurations of her latest X-rays,
her intestines shiny with barium
like felled trees we saw once along a road
in Indiana, tented with caterpillar webs;
although I've lost the cocoon I picked up
at that roadside table where we stopped,
my mother, combing her long hair, looking
curiously at the white, shrouded branches.