

Ablation

I cannot say if the ice upon
my hands has always held;
only that it never melts,
and that the frost in my veins—
the same frost that inches along

the bone, slow and hungry, like
a glacier feasting its way
over the land, vomiting
boulder upon boulder in its wake,
carving black lakes and boreal valleys

—settles in the crook
of my elbow where the hoarfrost thickens
and grows until the pain paralyzes, leaving
me to wonder if my mother has gifted me
her arthritis after all.

This was before I knew just how
warm a pair of human hands could be.
Your fingers, a taste of
summer, remedy the ice, just as
the sun-kissed sands, pressed firmly into the lines

of your cherry palms, flush the winter
garrisons from the crooks and crevices; such
soldiers who, so begrudgingly,
planted their icicle roots into the loam
of my flesh, leaving me blue and ectothermic,
creaking, cracked, and splintered.

But you, my love, your hands
melted mine, and though you flinched
at the cold, you held me all the same,
so that I might begin to grow
anew, amidst your blossoms.