

Lowcountry

Rebecca Silverman

i.

At noon the muscadine juice is hot
and thinned like blood.

The seeds stick to legs and fact:
snakes are slipping between
the trellises, and they are black
and patterned black.

ii.

The west window's panes are cracked,
the lampshade the orange of
cow-itch blossoms, trumpet shaped
and poison, but the sides

of the roads are wisteria, the color
of eyes at night, lavender;
the smell is sick:
ferment under grapevines,
smell of scraps for chickens.

iii.

Dawn smells in early fall
of chamomile; the spread of flowers
in the sky means dawn.

At dusk the petals fall wilted
on the ground, and turn to dew.

iv.

The four o'clocks by the chicken coop
bloom at seven. Inside,
a chicken nests with snakes,
birthing their eggs. Old women
empty their grits
to make eggshells; the contents
of the land, when roosters crow,
are gray upon the gray ground.