

Egrets, While War

In the garden, egrets are doing their stalking dance, and it's easy to see how they are really feathered dinosaurs flown in through a hole from the past. Somewhere, a city under siege remains sleepless. The dirge of *loss recovery loss loss loss* continues. I cannot say why other people's family portraits fill me with such tectonic longing. Ancestors who stepped from ocean to land, shedding fin, tail, gill, to transform into a symphony of great-aunts and uncles. We bury clues of our dispossession—bony-plated language, heart-scarab. Our task is to march on. To rise and leave the apple orchard, throw stones at marauders who threaten to tear up the carpets. Father will file a missing person report while spring carries on with its hedonism. It is pointless to resist the pull of our fruiting bodies. Whatever we fear has already happened. Will keep happening. If we could just wake to fullness in a delta with the berry-red lips of an amorous god upon us. Climb trees to listen to heartbeats. But here, the earth remains leashed to mystery—clay fingerprint, fragment of jaw. The sea retracts her tongue like a warning. Winged creatures lurch and soar. Whiteness,

then vanishing.