

Twenty one in my childhood bedroom

Youth scotchtaped to the walls
peels and flakes, withers into dust.
Sugary ash,
fine and soft as talcum powder,
it settles.
It coats the crests,
snow-caps the hills.
Cocooned and swaddled.

Suffocated? No.
Pressed, like a flower in a volume,
into the sheets my mother tucked
around this yellowed mattress.
The cranes on the garland will not fly,
though I prayed life into them when,
with young pink thumbs,
I creased their stiff bodies into being
and gave birth.

I lay in the sediment,
allowing it to clump and collect around my nostrils,
the part of my mouth where dry becomes wet.

Old blood still quietly smudges the hardwood,
near hidden in the swirl of a knot.
But there is still paint there, too.