

Magnolia

Beside the window, a star magnolia, bare
branches, a few stubborn leaves
once green, now edged with brown,

tips of the branches like down,
like your head under my hands:
blonde fuzz. Wide-eyed baby, eyes

that looked upon the new light
like a conqueror, just landed
on a blue shore. So long ago.

Now, we talk, we are careful to show
only the safe side of our hidden worlds.
“Don’t tell me that,” you warn, a fence

of silence, of things too tense
to mention, even in a poem. The old leaves
stiffen against the wind, rain

softens its fist, but for now, restraint
is our only growth, one small white star
at a time.