

Peony

there is too much orange—
the eft I cradle, salmon on whole wheat
the sitter's nail polish

 this morning my brain is programmed
 to unfold its peony

I turn off the house lights
recite my self-help list

 how the scent disrupts the brand newness
 of mid-May air

 petals in my vesicles, vaulting the synaptic
 clefts

so quiet in the house
the sound of a fox swishing through grass on black toes
is amplified

sharp snap could be a twig
but later I discover

a vole's velveteen jacket
flung into the undergrowth

bright lantern of the delicate face
snuffed

 neurotransmitters
 texting from the peony seeds

Partial Cloud

The deep brain insists: adaptation
carries one only so far. Thus

only behind aquarium glass does the
octopus cease dreaming, the neon-blue

sting ray circumnavigate the central atrium,
a doggedness bordering on obsession.

Should you mourn the plight
of black cherry trees, their piteous decline

for luxurious cabinetry, consider instead
the shrinking Arctic Circle, the death

of thousands of years of ice. I was inside
the roundabout and you were outside.

We waved and called.
On the side of the Coit Tower

where the Golden Gate Bridge dominates the skyline
all the windows are locked.