

LETTING HIM IN

Through the curtain's crack I can see him
toss his head outside, sweeping his hair back
into a makeshift ponytail. The day begins

when Gabe mounts his motorcycle
and my cat pads to the window, watching him rev
the engine five full minutes in the cold.

My dreams are like this: predictable stud
in black leather, leg jamming the pedal.
Some nights I hear a woman's voice

across the hall, her face rounding out
my peephole. I go to sleep early,
blanketed by desire. Ramona licks herself

in bed next to me, tongue-strokes smoothing
the same patch of fur ten times over.
Her ears perk even before the knock

and I stumble to unlatch the chain. Of course
Gabe's here to borrow something, barely
greeted me before he scoops Ramona to his chest.

He looks mangy this close, smells less
like leather than a pillow's musky neck scent.
What if I pinned his hand to my breast?

Would it change the fact that he's here
for a toilet plunger? Before he leaves
I can't help it: I graze the small of his back

just enough to want all of him,
even his gritty stubble, his left leg
twitching like a dog's while he's waiting

by the door, in idle. My fingertips tingling
with touch, I imagine us pressing together,
his obvious strokes, or worse,

the oblivious *thanks for the plunger*, purposeful walk
back to his apartment. I can see him preening there,
tweezing the area between brows. And now

I've ruined it—the suspended sweetness of not touching.
I press my palm to his back again, pretend
I was just guiding him out. He gives me Ramona.

She will feel his hand on her coat for hours.
She will paw the band of light beneath the door.