

## Grapes

The first time I saw him I aged three years. He drew wrinkles on my face with the petal of a dandelion, laughing of the irony while I sat still. told him I would make the noise go away but I was unsuccessful, but then the buzzing drew tissue paper from my brain and I could see again even though I did not want to. He wanted to know what I worried about so I said the weather was too balmy, and that heat makes me want to eat whole watermelons. I have grown tired of knowing what to say, much like he grows bored of my reckless fascination with feathers, much like I have somehow grown fond of having to utter the words "yes, darling, I'm fine" over and over and over. We are trapped in a perpetual hologram, the beat of the song we once heard when we were in heaven ticking through our minds, like a bomb about to explode faces of everyone we have ever known. I lost my train of thought somewhere around Chicago, and could never quite find my way back. But he was waiting for me on the platform with a single red balloon that read: "I love *spending time* with you" and a bowl of grapes. I took the grapes and got back on the train, trying to remember if I had ever cried and what it would feel like if I did.

- Jamie Howie