Where it Starts

Ashley Hillard
A chair bares creases, its deep feet like a bathtub, beware on a boat or a peel— cantaloupe or the back of a wheel— for it slopes and slopes, only wood, hinged with steel. Sticking out is a nail and all nails on the feet of all mammals, scratching another life in tree trunks, on a path of rosemary is an arm or a long liquid or branches searching and reaching my father, until he lays in it, rolls all about in its mosses and pasturing movements, where most types of ants dwell, while way over head, the wind howls my fathers home, smoke from beneath woolen blankets. A black bird catches in this new current. How she sputters, cough, she is falling, the wind whistling through her feathers, leaves. Father opening his hands, lets her fall into them, her wing in his hands, aflutter, and he feels for a minute her dying breaths and beatings of feather, the fighter, she speaks: care for earthworms and smooth shells peeled from beetle backs—their soundings, their taste and nutrient are all we have left.