

## *The Party*

We strung light bulbs from tree branches;  
our bodies were still bodies,  
but they couldn't make brightness for us,  
at least not with the scent of pollen  
in the air & our noses all sneezes  
& sniffing. I liked autumn  
because I liked cardigans hung rickety  
from people's shoulders; the night  
would be lovely because we knew our role  
in rendering it so. I was the thing I usually am,  
like the stagehand whose sole job  
is to pull curtain ropes on cue,  
I feigned necessary tasks—punch to taste,  
banners to hang—then finally said hello.  
Most were unaware of their place  
in the scheme, but with what grace they had,  
they played. Some would remember the evening,  
but as shards: light in the leaves,  
a small fire by an open door. In retrospect,

I wanted to keep the heat lamps  
& tenderness out of it. Wasn't this occasion  
my creation since I thought to sweep light  
through trees? But maybe it was the boy  
who picked the music or the girl who clicked  
the scene to pictures, a ravenous flicker  
in our midst. We were trying to make something  
where something already stood: our night  
layered on the darkness & stars  
that made night possible regardless  
of our loving it so. It would permeate past  
the soaked-pollen air, bright bulbs gleaming  
through green or no. Still, I'd be lying  
if I said you could have been anyone,  
that it was the night I really loved.