

HERA NAGUIB
In the storeroom

A photo falls—of you,
of the city of saints. Behind you,

terra-cotta bricks of a Sufi shrine.
Centuries ago, a Sufi arrives at the city.

At its outskirts, the people hand him a glass full to the brim.
No more room, they say. Outside, too, the season

is long and indisputable, winter locks necks
with another day, fetters petals in the ice.

The Sufi entertains them, returns the glass
after placing a flower on top, afloat

and out of season. All day, I bury the omens—
the phone call, the flowers, the missed note

in this far country—no longer count
the leaves falling over the headstones

outside my window, the days that lift
and drop their cloaks at the sill, the regrets

that loom, the crown of hawks overhead.
The Sufi is welcomed. He graces the city in return

with a day of endless sun. Beneath damp cartons
and spider webs, back in the storeroom,

I bury the photo. Behind me,
the telephone rings. I answer it,

my mouth a broken glass.