

SARAH BURKE

Dear Desert

I expected a wasteland of dead rock  
whittled to dust. Instead I found you

alive, brimming with purple  
wisps of lupine, cactus tips flaming

like candles and thought *Fuck you.*  
All you needed to offer up a flower

was a white sheet of sand,  
a seed, a thimble of rain. Fuck

every failure, every trail of blood  
I thought might lead to a daughter,

a son. Under your sky I poured whiskey  
into my cider, devoured raw fish,

smoked meat, soft cheese, all the fruits  
I wanted so badly to be forbidden.