Irides

My mother grew a circle of irises
dividing koi pond from rose garden,
bearded blond heads bobbing like fishhooks,
their reflections prismsed into Greek goddess robes,

(messengers, I know, using flowing rainbows
as bridges between earth and the heavens,

I thought they’d turn to gold by seven,
melanin changing one iris from blue to tan

Dina’s *heterochromia iridium* charming bartenders, disc jockeys
and the entire Columbus Clipper baseball team

her bi-colored eyes blending way too smoothly
into exotic berry wine coolers in the

back of a maroon Escort, looking rosy
from the rear-view mirror before a smell

like Jim’s skunked Australian shepherd washed in
tomato juice, baking soda, and hydrogen peroxide

opened my doors)—the bronzied lower petals
grow fuzzy from rhizomes, purging the liver;

behind the cornea their tinted apertures open

symbols of passion planted on graves.
Doodle Poll (Calendar View)

She regrets

she's unable to meet today.

Yesterday

she looked out over a low creek

turning into

a heron

snaking between sumacs,

one of the bird people

gliding with

starched cotton wings

thinking only

“I’m hungry”

as she dived.
Sunflower Summer

That summer had a face like a sunflower
mane of yellow hair framing circle of tan

Clytie watching Apollo kiss her sister beside the coal bin
in the back of a three-car garage

In Takeshi Kitano's *Hana-Bi*
“flower fires” create and consume
Horibe painting smiling flower heads on lions
bending upward toward hana-bi hung in the sky

just like Romero's *Land of the Dead*

flowers in the graveyard
not the kind you lay on the ground

sky flowers way up in heaven
reflecting off a paddle boat
in the center of Duck Lake

and those chipped teeth
moving to face the sun

distracting decoys planted in a line
their thick stalks confront the wind

seeds weakening growth
like Clytie’s sister locked in a cave

or

planted in loose soil behind the Buick

Clytie turning slowly
Her flower face following
Apollo’s dazzling chariot and radiant crown
JAMES GARNER UNDER SUMACS  
(OR JUST LIGHT THE DAMN THING ON FIRE!)

Your boyfriend’s dead he says  
I laugh  
ask which one  

but think of James Garner  

my own Murphy’s Romance (1985)  
staying for supper only if breakfast is included.  
How do you like your eggs?

A sign maybe.

The amaryllis stops swallowing.

The cilantro dries up.

I hear people went to the wrong Roanake this weekend.

I remember stooping under a sumac  
blushing under leaves  
and listening:

Fragrant bobs attract bees.

Stems transform into pipes  
fluorescing under ultraviolet light.

I fear  

my toes will grow numb  
harden and fall off,  
useless and without scent.

I fear  

I’ll say, “I’m 60,”  
(Just like Murphy)
and the door will slam

leaving me outside
    in the coming dark.
Titan Arum

In July

my elbow
swells

like a corpse
flower

loose scar folding
over a loaf of arm

a human pistil
sweating

flesh flies’
perfume

I smell
stink

bugs
in a composter

and that
dead cow

we nearly
stepped in

on

Regina’s farm.