is what the woman from the VA said when I asked about the paperwork for my mother the morning of my father’s death. The veteran had a name, eyes the color of honey, blood-bruised arms (in the end). No one thanked the veteran for the honey. They wanted the corneas—a thing you cannot see—instead. The veteran is no thing. One time, on a business trip to Texas, the veteran was Al Pacino—at least to a fan for whom he signed an autograph. Once, the veteran was a pitcher, scouted by the Yankees in ’63. He didn’t make the team. Now his rotator cuff is someone else’s. The veteran is thanked for this in a letter from his donor recipient. But he cannot read without his honey eyes, through the blue urn’s thick ceramic wall. Back when he could see, the veteran spied the Son of Sam leaning on an elm outside his house in Queens Village. He told the story after Berkowitz was arrested. No one believed. The veteran was golden tongue, prone to exaggeration. Now the veteran is an unmade body: cornea and rotator cuff, spun bone and char. He is a box of unpaid parking citations, birthday cards, bet tickets from the track’s glossed concrete floor. He is Ruffian and Foolish Pleasure pins from the 1975 Match Race at Belmont Park, an old Metropolitan Life ID, locks of his kids’ hair in tiny plastic bags, devout keeper of all things past. We thank the veteran for his service.