

Ode to a Bee on the Small of Your Back **by Partridge Boswell**

Blind to what tickles the delta of nerves there

 you rub a humming with the back of your hand,
surprised by the soft pulse of a drowsy bee

that somehow hitched a ride on your chambray shirt

 when a moment ago you went outside, barefoot
in cool October dew to kiss your love goodbye

through her driver's side window beside late

 rugasas that waited till now to speak, each petal
speckled with a hundred glistening tears of sunlight.

Winter still counties away, larkspur fooled by

 recent heat into blooming again, the meadow
rue still tall, its edges only beginning to tinge

like an iconic actor with a full bucket list of roles

 to gray into. The garden and hive you tend for another,
thriving these six years (or is it seven now?) since

she left. Easy to lose count with sun's wheel grinding

 memories smooth as it fades needles and leaves.

Easy to see numbers for what they are: cold

and stunningly meaningless as stars. Easy to say

 winter would have killed him anyway, as you bend

 and lift him from the kitchen floor with a spoon