I’ve dressed my studio in red: red sheets, red couches, red desk chair. But it’s the red hummingbird among a bed of roses on the monoprint that hurts the most. It’s pinned to the wall like a gash slowly clotting.

I once cut my finger slicing into a bar of cheese, and I licked the blood drops on the counter because I was tired of the screeching of roses—how they kept me up at night, demanding comfort. No matter how long I pressed my tongue against the paper I only managed to reopen the wound of the hummingbird’s wings.

My lover slept beneath the covers while I wrote, and I invented a name for him in the story about a man (who’s a writer) who was going leave his lover because he didn’t like the color of his lover’s nipples—the stains of blood that wouldn’t soften or come off the skin no matter how much, no matter how long he lapped at the nubs of red flesh.

To satisfy his lust for the erasure of red, he sat at his desk drinking glass after glass of merlot. Once he finished the bottle, he turned off the lights and made everything red disappear at once. But his lover’s nipples, how they glowed like the tips of matches holding in their fiery breaths, how they radiated with the need for attention.
The writer in my story bit into his lover’s chest, and the lover awakened to an hour of passion in bed. The writer in the room let his lover sleep. He bit into the swollen rose going dry inside the passionless bed of his mouth.