Yield Stress

Before skinned rabbits hung upside-down
    from the dogwood. After I lied about

having ever killed a single thing. Before
    I lied about whether or not I knew how

to handle a rifle. After all, all I have
    are these hands. Only old women can

separate truth from bullet holes. Before
    the pocketed knife became a family

secret. After secrets. After a continent
    split in two under my grandmother’s

feet. Before the field was razed, not
    harvested. Before I was the field,

and allergic to myself. Or you. I am
    always forgetting how you permeate

each landscape. After the dam went up
    all I could think of was your hand

against my throat. Before my dress
    snagged on the barbed wire fence.

Before the ring was purchased, then
    pawned, there were mountains still

returning to their first selves after
    years of glaciers pinned them back.

I mean held. Who is to say true
    form. Here I am, a pilgrim atop frozen knees.

After a decade, here I have gone soft with
    new heat. Here I am, thawing,

here is my sex-swollen tongue.
    (It was yours it was yours it was yours)