Here is a room. There is a couch, and a rug, and a thin black music box, and a plain glass vase holding a red flower.

The woman walks to the couch and sits. She stares at the grey wool of the cushion, and as she looks her eyes turn grey, and the cushion looks back at her. She brushes her skin against the rough wool, and her fingers sink through it as she becomes part of the cushion and the fabric touches her bones, her meat, her small muscles.

The man walks to the woman on the couch. She hears him breathing and moves her attention to him, and wool unclasps skin and eyes turn brown as they unclutch the grey and as she feels his gaze on her body she feels eyes growing in her shoulders, her belly. She pulls her fingers from the couch and reaches for his mouth and watches her palm dissolve into breath and holds it out for him to bring into his lungs as tiny alveoli grow on her wrist. When he takes her finger into his mouth, her skin sprouts tastebuds and his tongue swirls into fingerprints and strokes her knuckle as her knuckle tastes his lips.

And when they kiss it is like this, lips and tongue and teeth dissolving into one another, and when they embrace it is like
this, skin dissolving into skin dissolving into waves that break with and over each other.

She stretches her hand out of the small of his back and reaches for the top of the thin black box, and opens it. They listen as the pulse of the music begins to flow toward the couch, the grey wool turning darker, the cushions starting to ripple. As the waves of sound reach his knee, the skin flickers, and she touches it with flickering teeth and cheek. The sound turns their bodies to pulse and flow and flicker as she listens to the music of his thigh and he listens to the harmonies of her neck and her earlobe.

She turns her attention from him, just for a moment of coming-apart so that she can feel the tension of him before coming together again.

And when their voices rise from the mingling, they merge with the music so that the sounds of the thin black box come from their mouths, and they listen as the box sighs and purrs with pleasure. And when they call to the gods in gratitude for what they’re feeling, the gods listen, and for a time the man and the woman are divine while the gods explode with desire and satisfaction.

Once they tire of being gods, the woman and the man close the music box, come unmingled, and find themselves once again. The woman pads across the rug and plucks the red flower from the vase and carries it with her to bed, where she lays it on the pillow and curls next to it and closes her eyes and brings her lips to its center and inhales deeply, and the man watches as soft red petals weave themselves into her eyebrows and lashes, and her breath begins to smell of roses, and her teeth turn to thorns, and as her hair plaits itself into green layered leaves he touches them and feels each of his fingers spreading into a thousand green strands. When he bends to whisper into the tiny pink bud of her ear, it blooms open for him, and when he hums the tune from the music box he feels her humming back, and as he listens his skin undoes itself and opens him to the tune as he dissolves into it with her. And they stay that way, joined in a becoming, until the man tires, and stops his whis-
pers, and brings himself back into himself, and sinks to the floor and falls asleep.

Soon, he will wake into a cloud of red petals held aloft by the memory of her hums and his whispers. As he hears and smells and touches he will watch the parts of him slowly turn thin and soft and red as he becomes the cloud, just as the woman has before him. Years from now, a storm will rend their house from the ground and after it passes all that will be left in place of their home will be a garden of roses growing out of a mattress, each playing the same tune from the same old music box when the wind blows through their petals.

But not yet. Now, the man sleeps. And he dreams of a woman with skin made of music and grey woolen eyes.