It was autumn and it was cold and she went out in the rain. She walked to a bench in the park and waited there until someone came. A man did come, and he was tall and smelled like cats. She sat with him for a while, silent and still with eyes closed while she tried to imagine herself into his pockets. Eventually she brushed the lint from her eyelashes and stood up and walked away until she came to a large dark puddle.

She bent down and sat beside it, and she waited for the rain to let up enough to still its surface, and when that happened she peered inside and looked for what looked back. When she recognized herself in the water — and this did not always happen, and certainly not right away — she closed her eyes and felt a splash on her face as a tiny frog hopped out of the puddle and sat on her knee and blinked up at her as she opened her eyes again.

She reached out to touch it. In that gesture of connection, once again she saw herself, and again she felt a splash as two more miniature green frogs hopped from the puddle and settled beside her. She sang to them — just a little — and as she heard herself in the song, she watched as the ground greened, covering itself with little hopping things birthing themselves out of splashes.
She looked around herself at the spreading carpet of small green gods with tiny frog eyes and small frog feet that she had called out of the earth in her acts of recognition. (Recognizing yourself is a rare thing, her mother had told her. It almost never happens. It happens all the time. It’s the most normal thing in the world. It’s a kind of magic. You have to be very patient, and very careful, and know how to look, and know where to watch. It can happen when you’re not looking. It will turn you into a magician, her mother told her. You must try never to do it. You must do it as much as possible. You are a goddess, her mother told her. You are nothing special.) She scooped up handfuls of gods and stuffed them into her pockets until she couldn’t fit anymore, and she nodded to the ones left behind and watched them disappear back into the puddle and got up and brushed leaves off the seat of her pants and wetly walked home.

Her tiny companions made the weather along her way. When a frog-god hiccuped, she heard a peal of thunder. Another one sneezed, and a tree fell over. As she walked past the man on the bench, he looked at one of the little gods and smiled, and when it smiled back the man felt heavy coins filling his hat and socks and mittens. When she walked past trees with the gods in her pockets, for a moment they each sparkled as if strung with lights, until she left them behind and the lights went out.

When she arrived at home, she scooped the gods onto the countertop and poured a plastic cup of bubble tea into a large saucer and watched as they hopped over to it and tried to balance themselves on the tapioca pearls.

There were no mirrors in her house, no photographs or portraits, no cameras, no laptops, no paper or pens, no magazines or books — nothing to record an image or a sound, nothing to convey herself to herself. She used to have all of these things and she nearly drowned in the clouds that would open up in the ceiling and pour down upon her every time she saw her own reflection in a glass or the description of a character in a story. Jellyfish gods rained down with the water, and her skin would sting with the bites of their long jelly arms. It was better when
she was outside. Somehow the puddles helped. She found the frogs more manageable.

She sat down in the kitchen and fanned her fingers out on the table until she could just make out the faintest webbing starting to form between them. She bent her back until it was nearly horizontal, and as the little gods started jumping out of the saucer and over to her, she widened her eyes and they began to bulge out from her head. She opened her mouth, and one by one the gods jumped inside. When her cheeks were full with them and the saucer was empty, she closed her mouth and began to chew, tasting damp and pebbles and wood and leaves and smoke. As she swallowed divinity, her fingers unwebbed and her eyes receded back into her face and her skin lost its green tinge, and she got up and took herself to bed. That night she dreamed of the man on the bench. And when she woke up soaked, the bed and the floor obscured in a tangle of tentacles, she watched her eight fingers stretch and her knuckles grow suckers and she clicked the little beak forming on her lips, and she sighed, and she readied herself for breakfast.