

BARE LIFE

NINA PURO

There is the recent past and there is the distant past. There is the sound of windchimes—eerie, somehow. As if they know something in the low tones, as if they are warning in the high tones. As if the ghosts are back. In the close-packed concrete room, I could see the whorls in the girl's ears, the darkness that hung around her—the sense of unnamable damage, something torn, rent—and that was part of it: the witnessing. The way her hair fell in dark wings along her scalp, the mark the blade had imprinted. A long gash shorter than the length of what we could understand—scale, irrevocability.