

IF THIS WERE APPALACHIA AND 1929, WE'D STILL BE A COUPLE OF MOODY BASTARDS

MEG COWEN

We wouldn't have a dehumidifier and the neck
of your banjo might bend itself into the rain.

You'd find a way to make do—find the darkest corner.
All I ask is you play Wildwood Flower last because you say

oleander funny and I do so love to dwell, to laugh
at your claw-hammering—like you've got three dead fingers.

With no concept of electric light we'd sit, before the fire's tamped,
and agree that the night is one reticent bitch.

At this point I wouldn't know that paraffin could seal
the cracks lye lashes onto my fingertips during the wash.

If you felt inventive, you might see there's enough biscuit flour
on the floor to sop the oil your hand leaves on the drum.

All is well, you'd say, before going out at sunrise while I sew
up your socks and salt the jam with my free hand.

You would miter a table leg out back, the saw blade
stringing chords together in your head

while you steal glances at me over the windowsill,
each time looking to see if something clicks.

And each time I tell you to mind your fingers you say
besides your thumb, you really only need to keep one.