

INVASION

**BRANDON
COURTNEY**

This grief isn't mine
alone: the fall
 after returning

from war,
asleep beside my wife,
 a bat

appeared suddenly
in our room—
 stalked

mosquitoes,
while sulpher moths
 knocked

against the bulb's
remaining flicker—
 it circled

and circled and fed
until landing
on our north wall,
 trembling.

All the soldier does
after war is done
with violence:

I crushed
the black bruise
of its body
with my hands

before my wife could
open the window
or find a broom.

After, I washed
my hands
then fed

on my wife's fingers
and breasts,
swallowing

her breath
until she, too, fell,
saying to me:

with you
I have never felt
so safe,

saying to herself:
I no longer know you;
I've never been
so afraid.