

## i step inside myself

& find an orchard. trees hollow with rot. apples littering the ground. small bodies of fruit bruising, coring themselves open. this is not the orchard i want to live inside myself, but we do not choose what we are made of. unless we do & i'm offering myself an excuse. how would i know? what is the secret to learning? i haven't been to an orchard since my body was small enough to be called *my body*. i can reach only the edges of the memory, loose threads unseaming further with each grasp. the orchard. the trees lush with life. the apples littering the ground, whole. the wagon. the hay. the starch-stained fingers. the teeth before stain. the sweet before sick. the life before life. i remember the pale wooden boxes or barrels filled to the brim with all the different apples. this is surely a different memory than the orchard. sour green pucker. surely this was Clare, the drive up or back down from visiting the brother. the gas station pizza. decades later & still it is recalled as the best. how did we get so far? there is an orchard inside of me full of rot. i am trying to misremember. i am trying to find my way out.