

Jessie Carty

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First House, First Summer

You call me in lead of the storm
saying there are plump clouds
level with your high rise windows

I ask if you have enough work
to keep you from driving just now

You do

You describe the slant of the rain
the way cheap newspaper boxes bend
and spread pages onto vacated streets

At 6:15 I hear the storm as it rushes
over my part of the suburb city

Lights dim

I pull plugs
flip switches

Where did I put the candles & matches
because I am ready

I have a box of books
and a new chair the delivery men left
in the otherwise empty dining room

Cleavage

He said the word twice, but I still didn't know
it
so he asked if he could check me.

He looked down my shirt, but said I didn't
have any.
It took me a while to find the word in the
dictionary

because c's can be k's and an e can be just
an e without an a.
The definitions folded back on themselves.
There was

the "act of splitting or cleaving," "the state of
being split
or cleft," "a fissure, a division." Then, "the
hollow

between a woman's breasts, especially as
revealed
by a low neckline." My nipples sat

far apart on a flat plain. There were no
mounds.
Not there. I wondered

if my privates were cleavage? I asked Mom.
She didn't like the word

and I wouldn't say where I'd heard it.
That summer I snuck my hands

into the sides of my tank tops
to see if I could make myself cleave.