

LAUREN CAMP

## My Twenty-Ninth Year

I used to be part of a group of women who hived  
every Tuesday, passing

small explanations  
of anything but

America between them. Dogs touched  
the ground. They were old,

older, nested and done  
with life's jostled questions. I drove

an hour, the sun branching  
my face through the dashboard  
to listen to the loafing of jasmine and the women

who tended their ease. I remember

they wore sweaters  
with ribbons. We went in and out  
with our needles. The silver

settings gushed light on doiled tea tables. The houses  
fringed in precise shrubs. You'd think

I would be bored, pressed inside  
such careful affable people. But I dwelled in that and learned

parked ritual, such this and that and systematic time for every sort

of slowing. Though, yes, I always drove off  
fast, tires slapping asphalt like horses, rushing  
through windwreck to a shelter where I hadn't yet  
erased suggestions of children, where I only  
knew perfectly happy. Week after week,  
I drove to the women, each wheel rounding  
ground with its schemes,  
my one self never thinking about the roots or the field  
we all get to, just getting there, just going awhile.