

November

We unplugged the old television. It started humming Tuesday night and after three days, turned into an incessant rumble. The news still seeps in. I go from one doctor's appointment to another, mine, my daughter's, mine. The meditation instructor says with practice we can learn to tolerate our commute. I don't believe her. Her voice first annoys then soothes me. I listen to the same three songs on loop as I wait for my biopsy results. Across the country, my friend is dying. It no longer matters how much science she knows. Eighteen years ago, I visited her daughter in the hospital hours after she crashed into the world, screaming.

In *The Woman Destroyed*, Simone de Beauvoir wrote "My life was hurrying, racing tragically toward its end. And yet at the same time it was dripping so slowly...hour by hour, minute by minute."

It's Election Day again. Last month, I stood in the middle of my favorite green field. Time collapsed—I was seventeen. I was forty-six. The light lifted gold leaves from the herringbone bricks beyond the gate. In a stiff chair, I listened again to the voice that lit four years of autumnal darkness. There is nothing more I want. The behavioral therapists tell me it's best to leave on a high note. Not to worry if my daughter needs to walk out at intermission if she enjoyed the first act. My favorite store is going out of business; the rent is too high. Never again will I see the ceramic doll heads stacked one top of another in a tall, glass vase.

