

You Ask How

You ask how and I tell you about the fire,
that day every soft spot lit up

in the deep under-skin of my interior.
My look too long into the eyes I'd loved

since 7th grade. Lips pinked
and glossed, legs urgently shaved—

the rapidly emerging sex
of our bodies, meant only for boys,

later men. You ask how
and I say: cup tipped on its side,

empty of itself; angel hovering
above her own numb flesh;

walking, until I couldn't tell waking
from sleep. You ask how and I tell you

about the centipedes I had seen
in the night. Reality pressing through

my dream eyes. How I awoke
to find them alive—antennae to tail—

along the white crown molding
of my bedroom. You ask how

and I say: small word forming
in my mouth, in my body,

rising through limb and gut.
The man, the dream, the man

in the dream. How many times
had I seen this already? The man
to whom I am saying: no.
By morning, only the sticky remains
of a spider's home, sufficiently
abandoned. You ask how and I say:
cavern and ceiling and mind that is
home now to shaman and mystic —
where air flows into aperture,
and out of the darkness emerges
your own wild face.



Ashley Inguanta, photograph