

UNDRESSING FOR GABRIEL

Eugenie Juliet Theall

He knew I was a rock,
 that I'd break in his arms.
Like running water, he gnawed
 my left earlobe, first,
lifted my skirt, skimmed my calf,
 paused, behind my knee.
Threads snapped, buttons rolled
 across the hardwood floor
 and I split,
like a rock from the riverbed
 hot from the sun,
now halved in two, now cooling,
 and I am grateful
that he wedged his way in, persistent,
 patient, until I was silent
and naked, my clothes ringed
around my feet.