

Life Study: Camellias

Susan Rich

We need to look outside
ourselves to see

the sloping heads, the cartography of light

along the lip
of a hammered copper tray.

What might white camellias say

in such a private
disheveled state?

So much, we know,

belies the flounce of petals
in a tall, white vase—

a midlife meditation—

heaven-spent,
like bodies after sex

before one falls away.