

CECROPIA MOTH

I may never see your kind again—secretive
as you are and not given to public display.
In anyone's lifetime, you may appear but once.

It was well after midnight and we'd made
the drive through dense, disorienting fog—
past Hazleton, Wilkes Barre, then beyond

past Scranton, through Matamoras and over
the Delaware, to 42 and then up the bend past
Rio's old Quarry Hill Cemetery to these woods,

summer home since childhood. And there,
with spread wings, you were right at the doorway,
unmoving in the shining porch light. Come forth

from the dark of forest shadows, this
summer night's invitation to look and look
and be astonished. And who wouldn't be?

Your patterned, regal presence: each
banded, eyed wing like its own galaxy,
conjoining at your body well-dressed

in orange fur and a white ruff; your head
topped by black, feathery antennae
attuned to all the night's finer frequencies.

When the others had climbed the stairs to sleep,
I went back out, lingering on the porch to gaze
at you again. I knew by morning you'd be gone.