

Cactus Mother
—Kelsey Barnes

Cactus flower took years to bloom
under endless pinpricked skies.
No moonlight illuminated your center,
only fluttering moths eroding
every structure into dust.

Saguaro, wrapped her arms around the sun.
It cannot burn her, warrior of thick-skinned bliss
casting strange, distorted shadows
across the dry grass.

Opuntia, when your hair pulls out in handfuls
You have traversed dirt trails and lengthy summers,
many lifetimes spent in open air
and you are scared to leave this room.