

Jean Naté

Can you believe me and my cousins thought  
we was doing something? Spraying the perfume  
our mamas bought us to keep our fingers, sticky  
with fresh wet hormones, off they bottles of White Diamonds.

We mimicked our mothers: studied our baby  
faces in the bathroom mirror. Spritzed both sides  
of our necks. First one wrist, then the next. The crease  
of each thigh. The inside of both ankles.

We thought the scent would last all night, that it smelt  
sweet, grown enough to pull in the bees or boys  
we had eyes for. It took years to learn the real tricks.  
Now, I take lovers who lay close enough to catch

a whiff of citrus. Vanilla. Velvet and bergamot.  
I choose a scent for each season. For morning.  
For midnight. One that I only spray  
when I see my favorites: those who I puddle for,

who turn me back to girl, to the beginning  
of myself. Now, I wear perfume that blows  
kiss after kiss. That curls it's finger towards you—  
promises: here, darling, here.