

KOREY WILLIAMS

Mondays in Autumn

After Robert Hayden

Besides the wish of pleated skirts in time
with peeving birdsong; besides her mouthing
of old school hymns like Blessed Assurance;
and even besides her cue of Chanel No. 5,
its familiar question purpled in early light—

silent. Before heading downtown, hair curled and laid,
our mother would light on our bottom bunk,
control in hand, and we'd titter every time:
her tries at Dixie Kong's hair spin, practice for when

she drove out with a tennis racket that junky
who pissed and squatted in the yard. "I got three
little ones inside," she swore. "They can't see all of this,"
swatting on the edges of which we laid claim.
Now, tossed and wanting, I love you deliberately.

KOREY WILLIAMS grew up in suburban Chicago and studied at Illinois Wesleyan University, the University of Oxford, and Cornell University. He was a finalist in the 2017 National Poetry Series and his work appears in *Assaracus*, *Fogged Clarity*, *Winter Tangerine*, *The Offing*, *Narrative Magazine*, and elsewhere. Williams is currently a doctoral student at the University of Chicago.