

## Woman Ironing

*After Edgar Degas*

As she looks from a hem, bottle in palm, I take the position of her lips to be offering something that was once clean, an act of contrition, a wound given at birth. Then, I take her capacity to circumvent the room—to enter others' mouths like their own breaths—the way gallows have been celebrated as orchards; my teeth far apart. It is all sufficient. Silence is another's game. The hopeful tick of nothing only happens elsewhere. For in these moments, a tongue kept hidden is often mistaken as something to heal. As a mouth without a pattern. A tongue torn from its vantage point; a tongue buried somewhere like a saint, or a child's first notion of consequence.