Regimen
by Elizabeth O'Connell-Thompson

I cut my finger making dinner,
and the jagged edge of skin I'd left to heal and harden
wound new red paths across my cheek
as I dreamed of the rising sun, a hornet's nest.

I am becoming a weapon unto myself.

Hot water is forgiving to tougher skins,
like candlelight when the dark won't do.
In the beginning

I would soak before you came to me.

You'd say,
“How warm you are. How sweet to touch.”
And I let you.