

## The Bug

(previously published in *Poetry*)

lands on my pretty man's forearm. Harmless,  
it isn't deadly at all; makes his muscle flutter  
—the one that gets his hand to hold mine, or  
ball into a fist, or handle a gun. It's a Ladybug,  
or an Asian Lady Beetle everyone mistakes  
for a Ladybug—eating whatever  
it lands on. My pretty man is asleep—at ease, or  
plotting like the bug. Or maybe the bug  
is a blowfly—eating my pretty man's tan  
from his pretty arm. My man swat it  
without waking, as if he's dreaming of an enemy,  
or me. When my pretty man isn't asleep  
he's got a temper.

No, he is not  
asleep. He's wide awake and wants me to tell you  
I'm wrong. Blowflies don't eat skin,  
they lay eggs on skin. He knows all about  
blowfly larvae. Napoleon used them  
to clean war wounds, my cold pretty man  
says in that pretty way,  
with his cold pretty mouth. He's eaten plenty  
of bugs before. On night watch,  
over there. Over there, they're everywhere.