

HOW FAR BACK CAN YOU REMEMBER?

Mixed tea leaves and heart beats so loud,
muddle into sedatives as a counterweight.
In the spirit house, I am alone, inescapable,

the way out only found by looking in,
down through the rafters, only shrieking,
no shimmer, sorry, Ashbery. Sorry Asheville,

I can't stay. Your hidden black bears,
disheveled Black Mountain are too obvious,
reminders of all we've lost. There are so many

secrets in the spine of Appalachia, I've
been trying to tap them out, over-turning
musk-covered peaks to catch a clue, only

finding a longing with nothing left to long for,
ennui and burned up roaches. The day after,
I find a single scarlet Carolina leaf alone with me,

and when I pick it up, it pulls me from the fabric
of this world, the lesson: *all memories are generic
spectres of truth...* I hear your footprints

call my name, but it'll turn your eyes to orchids
waiting for my signal back, because everything
is an imaginary reason to keep holding out for more.