

MELISSA STEIN

Playhouse

Under a collapse of honeysuckle
and its fury of bees, under a mulberry

canopy, its wavering thatch of green—
that's where you'd find us when the voices rose,

playing out civility: leaf-napkins, twig-utensils,
acorn-goblets, tea of wild scallion

and mud. Beside the garden's tangled
wire. Thimbleberry, chokecherry. Lulled

by the overripe reek of mulch, our own
quiet in failing light. All summerlong

we colluded on a patchwork of dried leaves
stitched together by stems—crimson, bruise,

amber, brick, cinnamon—to blanket us
when those voices called us home.