

there is such softness  
imbued into the first syllable  
of that word. a child mispronounces  
“r” as “w”, even softer now,  
but the “t” catches you  
off guard like a trap  
snapping shut. [t]  
dyed, heat  
stroke, cannibal  
-ized by their own  
mother rabbit, the balls  
of fur meet their end swiftly  
in our childhood care, don’t they?  
i have never owned a rabbit’s  
foot, despite owning a baby  
rabbit named Corbin for  
a day, a dog for a year,  
a fish, a pet rock. i  
find it garish, to  
hold onto the  
smallest  
piece  
of  
an animal,  
as a testament  
that you can use  
it and have need of it  
far more than they do in  
another animal’s stomach, or  
even a little shoebox grave  
in the backyard. i would  
rather, and do, the gray  
fur earrings I own,  
soft as touching  
a soft spot on  
a newborn  
still, still  
revolv  
-ing in the  
same cycle as  
the universe, a  
beautiful first eye  
of calciform, vessels  
and skin translucent as a

bubble on a pond's surface  
part air, part water, part something  
else entirely. i do not want to  
know the rabbit who died  
so that i could have stew  
the deer who became  
venison either. i pull  
at my own skin,  
it puckers and  
drops down  
to its place  
over my  
body  
a  
good  
organ,  
doing as  
it is told with  
out too much asking.  
will we hunt for rabbits?  
will we take our smallness,  
ready it like a clawing, biting,  
trapping thing that survives off of  
what it kills, then grooms its darkened  
feathers or fur, unaware of how closely re  
-lated they are in the animal kingdom? flesh  
of my flesh, blood of my blood, little rabbit the  
size of my foot, and trembling just as much  
in the hopes that i do not see it crouched  
in the hollow by a tree root, brown fur  
camouflaging it enough to the some  
unwary eye, that has not become  
alert to small things becoming  
still, still things erupting in  
movement. it surprises me,  
how much desire i have  
to swallow the wild  
-ness you possess,  
i lick my teeth,  
catch scent,  
catch prey,  
catch.  
eat.

**Elizabeth Upshur** is a Black Southern writer and guest on Tsalaguwetiyi Land. She is a Fulbright alumna, and serves as poetry co-editor at Okay Donkey Mag, contributing editor at The Seventh Wave, and is the cofounder of The Southern Esesu Endeavor, a virtual thirdspace retreat for Black Diaspora writer