

ROSS CLARK

LONG-DISTANCE CALL

The phone rings while I am shaving,
so you answer.

From your tone of voice, and one half
of the conversation,

I can tell it is your first husband.
You talk as friends.

In the bathroom I am understanding
and jealous and cool

all at once. I stay there for
the next twenty minutes,

gazing into the mirror and scraping
at my face.

DIANNE BATES

TELEPHONE CALL

These days
we talk along
the thin wire
of distance.
Our voices bounce
through air
like bats.

It all sounds so polite, little sister.

At your end
in the background
a man is watering earth
where they buried cables
this morning.

A snake enters your house
ugly black line
stretched
between us
and you never know
if it is there
with you
in the house
or not.

It strikes at your dreams
and though wishing it
gone,
you always suspect
its presence
breaking through barriers
you build to keep
bastards like me
at bay.

MANFRED JURGENSEN

a call

words like pollen. it is not clear who speaks.
time wants to fertilize the telephone.
this is not the season. we are alone.
the vase is filled. the distant blossom leaks.