

RINGS

It's late in our season of waiting.
The fig tree on the corner grows

heavy, exquisite. For seven months
I've paced the green

circumference of my life. I'm lucky —
there's a humdrum here. A room

with an unworried view. Today
she calls me with the news: they're punching

through the walls. And have I heard
two girls I know from school

have been shot in the head? I'm blanking
on the faces, picture apples (cored)

instead, she tells me one of them was pregnant
with the killer's child. Meanwhile

the latest candidate, what votes will count
or not — Forgive me this

my everyday. All that I
left, forgot. Outside,

the orange god of sun
is peeling off his rings.

In school, we learned the fleeing girl
transforms into a tree. Then we learned

the core of every living tree is dead: heartwood,
the hardest wood, which every year surrounds,

as cells surround a neural stem
to form the fetal spine.