

# Carolina Mantis

Poetry • Kayla Burrell

I'm not quite through  
the brightest part of morning  
when the sun wakes the mantis  
with its heat slanting onto the porch.

Mantis on the third-floor balcony,  
balanced against the brick,  
light warm on its back, summer  
on a dead leaf.

A cloud passes over. Miffed by  
the sudden shade, the mantis  
waves a leg into the dry air,  
sets it down, then stills.

The cloud goes; blue sky  
and happy mantis. It stays crouched,  
a hint of a lean toward  
the toasty open. Suddenly:

A gust of early autumn air.  
Mantis turns its hammer head  
and shakes side to side, rocking  
on its legs. A dance—

Or perhaps it's spied me  
gazing across my teacup,  
swaying gently like I do,  
tilting my head to understand it.