

## Ritual

The winter sun  
ages into brightness  
in the small window  
reflected in the mirror  
where I sweep black  
kohl over one eye,  
and then the other.  
Decades of mornings  
practicing this as though  
it were religion, and still  
I have not perfected it.

Holding skin taut,  
start with pencil tip  
on inner corner of eyelid.  
In one smooth motion,  
staying close to lashes  
as possible, draw line  
to lid's outer edge. End  
with light upward stroke.  
Smudge. Repeat on other eye.

"Why are you doing that?"  
my son asks. I look  
in the mirror. The sun  
has already left the window.