We Have Come to the End of the Oyster Months

All that time, I was briny and bivalve
for you. Through winter I traded the sea
for your mouth, roiled in your landlocked hands, fed
you raw, left my armor glistening, tossed
off in gutters or turned into the earth
of your garden. I made every shallow
place a bed for you to gather my pale
iridescence, my fine ridges, body
curved as a comma or teardrop, filling
your whole palm. I gave you my delicate,
brackish bones. You dredged me rough from the reef,
alive, morsel of flesh plump with clear blood,
crisp as snow on your tongue. All those brief, dark
days, I promised cucumber, melon, bright
liquid summer, never felt the heavy
gloves you wore to dull my scrape, to soften
my sharp frame, never troubled when you slipped
that short, stout blade against my hinge, the twist,
the pop, the knife sliding up to sever
the muscle that held me closed, never cared
when too much force would strip a red sliver
from your connoisseur’s finger, never guessed
your disgust when you first tasted my murk,
when the bay could not stay cold and I turned
lush, exuberant, protandric, clouding
the water, spawning millions of others

I might be. How you contracted then, shut
tight, left me to spoil in this heat, this meat
still rich and mineral, swimming in juice

that once summoned tides, that once summoned you.