

70x7

you want them to know not to
touch you when you are drunk

but they are not thinking of you.
your hands have grown heavy

with waiting, with wanting,
staying silent, wilting.

you cannot be loved like this.

you are 18, 20, 23,
and their hands slip between

the band without asking,
even after asking and being told no—

but you owe it to them, what did you think
was going to happen, you made it seem like—

you cannot finish these thoughts.

you cannot go through this again,
but you will.

you will tuck your shame behind your ears
and smile, soft and sweet. you are soft

and sweet. you do not bite. you do not
beg. you do not ask why. you do not yell.

you do not get to be angry.
you keep quiet and hope the next person

will be softer, kinder. that they will love
you the way you need to be loved—gently.