

Cold War, 1982

“I am asking you to keep the peace. We are not on trial, you are.”
- Protester, Greenham Common

The winter the washing froze solid on the line
I watched her hands turn to stone outside
Unpegging smalls refashioned by Gorgons
That she put on, hardening herself to him
And in the month of the fist (when the frost

Showed the true nature of water was fractal)
Locked him out in the stabbing air wearing
Only his ice-stained undies – for a joke, and
To prove that she could – then let him back in,
Again. That winter, mother, daughter, we were

Against. There was a woman in charge, but
She wore a suit. The mood was metallic –
We held hands and laughed at the Paras
Sawing wool with their Swiss army knives, and
Cheered when a figure broke through the

Perimeter and sprinted, as far as she could –
I asked, where were they taking her, like
That? *Prison*, she said, giving me her gloves
For our frostbite, for my future. That we might
Stay warm-blooded: ourselves v. the rows

Of petrifying helmets with batons, who,
The day of the breadknife, on the phone
Told her it wasn't any of their business –
Nothing they could do about the missiles
Striking the undefended walls of her home.

OLIVIA McCANNON