

KATE WELSH

## SECOND OF JANUARY

I stand in the shower steam and peel glitter polish off my fingernails. Today you have been frustrated — on the phone with insurance, too many emails — and you work at a manic speed, always scared of time, I think; of there not being enough. For me, it's mid-afternoon, work is slow, the poems aren't coming, so I am wasting time in the water, watching it pool at my feet. For a while you were preoccupied with the linguistic connection of time to money: spending it, wasting it, investing it. Once, we tried to think of other ways to talk about how we make it pass and came up short, vocabulary-poor, and continued on our walk, passing the old plaza's fountain, its bed sparkling with coins, spent wishes. When people die, their wish is not necessarily for more time — it's to have not wasted it on the wrong things. This, I think, is more precisely your fear. When I painted my nails two days before — gunked-up bottle on a half-read magazine — it marked another New Years' Eve wishing I might be different: a person whose hands seem *fun* instead of their usual long and anxious manner. Pulled hangnails and pale blue veins: unremarkable except in their gesticulating. I did spend the night gesturing, holding plastic flutes of champagne, catching your arm to kiss you at midnight, and I don't believe that polishing was time wasted, exactly. But the glitter only made me pay (*see?*)