

Six Months Before Marriage

by [Josh Dugat](#) in the [August 2023](#) issue

Inside the book you have been given, questions
throw sharp light upon mice that stir beneath
the cabinet trim: *If we are infertile, what then?*
How will we both care for our ailing parents?
Coarse frost crawls and fractures

into hope of knowing: cold will only
draw us toward each other, ever tightly.
When you read, *What arrangements would you choose
for your memorial?* briefly, I must
bury you — I don't

know how. You say you want to rest beneath
a fruiting tree, for shade and something sweet to give—
have your ashes mixed with loam, and spread amongst
the roots. I say I would gladly join you there.
Later, this evening,

when you're dreaming, I lean over you to turn
off your bedside lamp. Pausing, I kiss your hair-
line, my bottom lip upon your snowy forehead,
nose over your scalp. Already, you've begun
to taste like peaches.