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On a Rare Visit to Texas

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On a Rare Visit to Texas

Mardelle Fortier

A chameleon walks
along my arm
pulsating against my pulse.

He reminds me
of strange and rootless laughter.
Unusually green, an odd lizard,
he seems both old and young.
Holding onto his
wriggling body, I set him
against begonias, pansies,
yucca, a banana tree.
The chameleon subtly
changes color.

Pretending to be happy
and sociable despite worries
and isolation, I bring
this creature in to show
my smiling southern cousins
while northern wind blends
into the polite background
of soft, scented magnolias
and a mockingbird
tries out another voice.