

NATALIE RICE

PAPER WASP

Restless hoverer, you are a small
drawn-out minor chord against the window,

a musician of the hexagon
performing weaving songs of bark and twig.

Ancient paper-maker, calligrapher
of the colour grey, you send thin sheets
from your nest—the unknown folklore
of the Apocrita written in fine print.

Sometimes,
I find the sharpness of you in me:
open an envelope with a knife, pick nettles
without gloves, laugh shrilly.

But more often you are attracted to softness,
find the ripest fruit, gather
at picnics, perch on the first bite

of a peach—your pointed abdomen,
a comma
in a Ryōkan haiku.

