The Cicada

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I find you in the Des Moines,
six legs wide and struggling,
the murky water spins you
in circles, threatens death
by catfish or crappie, calls up
the sanctuary you left, twenty-four
inches under forest floor, sucking
tree root, waiting in nymph form
seventeen years to breed
with your brood and call *pharaoohhh*
until there is nothing else
but your song and the song of one
and a half million others, singing
their incessant hum through
shell-like drums, hypnotizing
the females, promising them infinity.

And despite your black, sectioned body,
and the flutter you cause in my chest
as if you had burrowed there, I scoop
you up, and you almost fill my hand,
poised on needle legs, stretching
your orange-veined wings, waiting
to dry. *You will be dead soon*,
become one of the empty, placid
shells I am already finding
on my driveway, the memories
of those who have finished, those
who have flagged the forest, laid
their eggs, mated. And after you
lift from my hand with the buzz
of paper wings, I realize, too late,
*we are the same age.*