At night I sleep—standing up I wet the hems of a birthing dress in winter sun; Brides-to-be swarm like bees about my feet, white-eyed, sorrow-knuckled, knowing my disaster the way monarchs chase the sun;

Akka I have never wept so wild; but mothers do not weep, this we know; instead they heave

sadness into sweet-mouth

pillows of dough; rub meditative orbits with warm oil into what clicks & whirs;

Mother who cannot remember steaming whispers
during rain when dancing heels snailshell curved
over gangrenous lick of road, of being superheated
by Mars, star-like, or the sun;

Mother who cannot remember girl as a gas bag,
girl as shattered watch face & river, skimmed
with milkfat, girl as witchkiller & brilliance, beaming;

Akka how I have dreamed & screamed for it, for the body failing to boil; for a thousand tributaries, possibilities, for all the bees we might have been;

& at night when under my skin swells a condemnation, I pretend the river leads elsewhere & not back to myself & that blackness only means

I am still asleep-