

Glass

A crack and then his scream
as I pack our picnic lunch. He runs
from the bedroom with hands clamped
to his neck. Blood seeps
between his fingers.
First the swimming pool,
now the glass.
This son of mine
 is always *almost* dying.
Seconds and millimeters
keep him tethered here with me.

In my line of work,
 I know all the ways a body
 can die.
I'm tired of learning new ones.
Each morning, when I leave the hospital,

I pass a tree which throbs
birdsong.
I peer into its lattice of branches,
and never glimpse birds—
only darts of flashing gold.
Sometimes,
 the *not* dying is worse.

My grandmother's bones bore
fragile fault lines. When her body
began to convulsively dance,
her vertebrae splintered.
I was pregnant when my father
told me her diagnosis—the word
chorea exotic
and lovely on his tongue.
The doctors recommended her children
be tested.
 My dad didn't want to know.

 I don't want to know.

Lately, I can't remember

my words. I gesture
to my children and hope
they interpret my request
for a glass of water
against a glass blue sky.

I love it here.
The stream burbles
down the mountain and sun
warmed pine scents the air.
I love our garden of cucumbers
and tomatoes. I love the speckled bird
who trills in highest branch
of the crepe myrtle.

How will I tell my son
when it's time to let me go?

