

My Life

I found my old journals
in the closet under the stairs,
and sat on the basement floor
to read, falling in love

with the girl who wrote them.
She hiked at night
and envisioned ribbons of moonlight
tangled in dark streams.

She wept when she read Elie Wiesel;
her hands went cold when she heard
the *Alleluia Dies Sanctificates*.
I could almost remember the taste

of her tears and feel her pulse
when I touched my wrist.
But I need to tell you
what happened last night.

A woman came in bleeding
and when I examined her,
a baby slipped
out in a gush of blood.

I caught him and his body
only filled my palm.
His legs dangled towards my elbow.
He waved his hand

and took uneven gulps
of air. She, so wracked
with grief and anger,
would not hold him,

so I did, until his heart
no longer beat beneath
his translucent skin.
She wept then, a mother twice

but also never.

And soon after, an ambulance
brought me a young man
whose face was swollen

from the peanuts which stopped
his heart and closed his lungs.
I tried—tried for over an hour,
but I could not keep him here,

and then his mother arrived.
I informed her that her son
was dead.
She argued I was wrong;

her hands trembled
as she found a picture
to prove that it was
not her boy,

but I was not mistaken.
When she finally got to see
him, she wailed
that's my baby

and lowered the bedrail to climb
onto the gurney and better
hold him.
Maybe now you'll understand

what I mean when I say
sometimes I feel cored,
my insides filled
with sawdust.

And why when I got home
that morning,
I crawled into bed
with my youngest son

because I was so cold.
I wrapped my arms around his oven
of a body, but even then
I did not cry.