

## Symbiosis

Take the simile. *Like* tastes firm like a tongue  
on my tongue when it collapses

body and language—or is it body  
and body—in its hinge.

Which one is real? The muscle or the word  
in my mouth. The question

is like a predator  
tearing into a living throat

or like its eyetooth  
already inside my neck, its soft pulp

pulsating under the enamel like a seed  
sensing dampness to root down

to an adrenal gland nested in nerves  
or like my nerves braiding up

from the seed, subliminal,  
to the skull.

It's not rhetorical.  
Violence is part of the syntax

of my body: two copies  
of every chromosome

severing themselves  
around a centromere. An egg.

It's like a game of telephone:  
I got it wrong.

I'm a whole book  
of mothers, already bound,

overwritten with little gestures, neurons,  
typos, all encoded.

Like mine, a mouse's tongue  
is hidden, crouched in the house cat's jaw

just before  
she crushes herself like a mouth.