

after

oral

surgery /

a

meditation

on

the

tongue

"A huge half moon, a monstrous cantle out"
—*Henry IV, Part 1*

There was cold in my left lung.

Tongue remembered this.

*

Wound that tongue loves, shaped
of whimper. A rat's tail.
A finger lake. A night trail.
A Stillborn, four teeth long.

*

By the grafted blood,
by the suture's grout,

The neighbors whispered, "let her out."

*

The hospice of space:
Tongue's occupied country.

She can't float through enough.

*

Once, I was cold in my left lung.
Tongue remembered.

In the beginning: Speech. Begun,
it shot out. Bullets of vowels lodged in teeth, snowbound
bushes, roots like grass shoots,

Their voices ground
against their likenesses.

The whole of their shapes:

Baby birds' head buried face down
in the muck, beaks spread, as if speaking.

"Why don't she stay wi' her own,
mind her own business.
Look at her, poor rag."

Tongue floated above them all,

a streamer attached to a louver
waving in the breeze, like an angel
attached to love.

*

Once upon a time tongue was

a slivered moon near bees laying in honey,
while butterflies sized their zig-zags out,
and tender longer near the elm,
and echoes let in fierce barks form the further away houses.

*

Meanwhile, nearby,
diving from the maple, a worm
eating warbler darts out,
in, princess atoning
for names of things,

like tongue.

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