## After Mary Oliver

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wanting, all there ever is
                              is wanting
hoping desire
i belong to something else
i belong nowhere else
an open world
traveling towards the edge,
               the edge that always seems to escape by
falling
the world is ending somewhere
the world is beginning somewhere
billowing new bellowing breath
show me:
your good soft animal body
your geese
your big breath
good is not required of:
your geese
your big breath
nor the soft hills of my animal body
my animal
       animal body my
       body body animal body my mine my
       animal body
       body animal
my animal soul lives in my animal thighs
in my soft animal thighs and things
telescoping
the forward tracks of so many geese
       animal body in the sky
```

animal body in the house places in families of things

awaiting green deep sun and soggy soil, spring thorny berry bush soft and hairy thigh

you have a place, places, in the family of things

## Matrilineal Line

High school aged portraits,
blooming a smile across time,
faces collected by my grandmother,
building an archive
complete with biographies
Of us.

Am I this woman?

I think so.

Is this matrilineal line mine?

Yes.

It is mine, this matrilineal line.

I wonder, would we dance together?

Do you all dance together now, around me?

Brought into a room, a space, a home, we will sip tea and coffee and water we giggle and hold our hands together, close patting backs and resting heads

We sing, sew, run, sleep, and wonder at these limbs and the way I was in her womb and she in you before that, and before that, and before that.

They care for one another now, ghostly arms and full souls. watching me as I am trying to watch them

Are we the same woman?

Carried through wombs and into this moment at which I try to unravel

something,

anything, about how we got here?

## Hard/Soft

my grandmother with the faulty reproductive system. who bore my mother with a faulty reproductive system of her own, who bore me whose womb is untested.

They demanded children they both demanded life from life.

I, too, demand life from life, in new forms, new ways.

Sometimes I think I am my grandmother's daughter. Sometimes I think my mother thinks that too. I wonder if it feels like a miracle or a mistake?

"It shouldn't be this hard."

My mother has long believed that my experience of the world is too hard, which I often heard as "you are too soft"

(I hear it still as "you are too soft" or, "how did my womb bear you?" or, How did you come out of this body, which has borne three children and tried to bear three more?)

What about me latched onto her? What about her held me in?

## thick tongued

My tongue is thick with sleep and gratitude

for the birds outside, that chirp sweetness in the maze of branches of the tree of heaven bare with winter, richly sapped

In conversation, tender kind together.

My tongue is thick with gratitude for the friends who listen through words to the birds in the maze of branches of the tree to heaven

through words to the healing tender kind together

It's a gray, gray day and we love with one another.