

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.