

Caregiver

for Lucy

They found you rotten, as any body
would be after a week on the floor.
Your skin marbled green,
belly swollen, blood pooled in the arms
and thighs that lifted me

out of car seats, into cribs.
Why dwell on the gore of it?
I was too young
when you snuck me the first coffee
from that rainbow mug, no cream

or sugar. *Coffee. Cough. Eee.*
Your wide red mouth would repeat
until I could say it, hands holding still
the fists I'd throw when I couldn't
get it right. We shared that black

before my mother returned at five,
smelling like chalk and fig perfume,
before you pulled away with a check
stuffed in your pocket, yes,
before you pulled away.