

answer/no

darkness and the baby sleeps
darkness and the baby is awake and rooting
darkness and the baby sleeps and the mother wakes to inhale his
breath
darkness and the mother's dreams throttle her waking
darkness and the mother's heart pounds her into waking from the dream

the mother dreams hands
the mother dreams, dreams a screaming
the mother dreams cool voices going cold, freezing
the mother dreams begging
the mother dreams no answer

this is a dream of the baby
this is a dream of the baby's birth, his speed
this is a dream of time and no time, a dream of the clocks of the hospital
and the timepiece of her body
this is a dream of the disbelief of the voices, her calling to them
this is a dream of their answer: *no, you are wrong, we will not*
this is a dream of their answer: no answer

the answer of the fast hands of embedded fear
the answer of hands without harmony, the answer of hands attaching, the bothered
palm impressing
its answer on the heave of her belly, and the hand's fingers seeking rough
answers from her cervix and the cervix says *open, thin ~*
and the hand thinks *I need a problem and*
an answer and makes the reach for the scissors --
only one answer: cutting that patient circle ringing the baby's head

the baby is born, his body pulled into breath
the baby is born and the hands holding him are not his mother's
the baby is born and the mother waits
the baby is born waiting for his mother, impatient for her new body

morning and the mother wakes to pain and impatient terror/dread rises
in her like red climbing the thermometer
morning and the mother makes her baby's breath milky
morning and the mother carries her baby and her doubt into the day
morning and the mother loses the day to fact and memory
morning and the mother calls herself no-backbone and
not-even-for-my baby

the baby is born, the baby sleeps
the mother dreams
this is a dream of the baby
this is a dream of dulled hands hammering out a mother
this is a dream: no answer